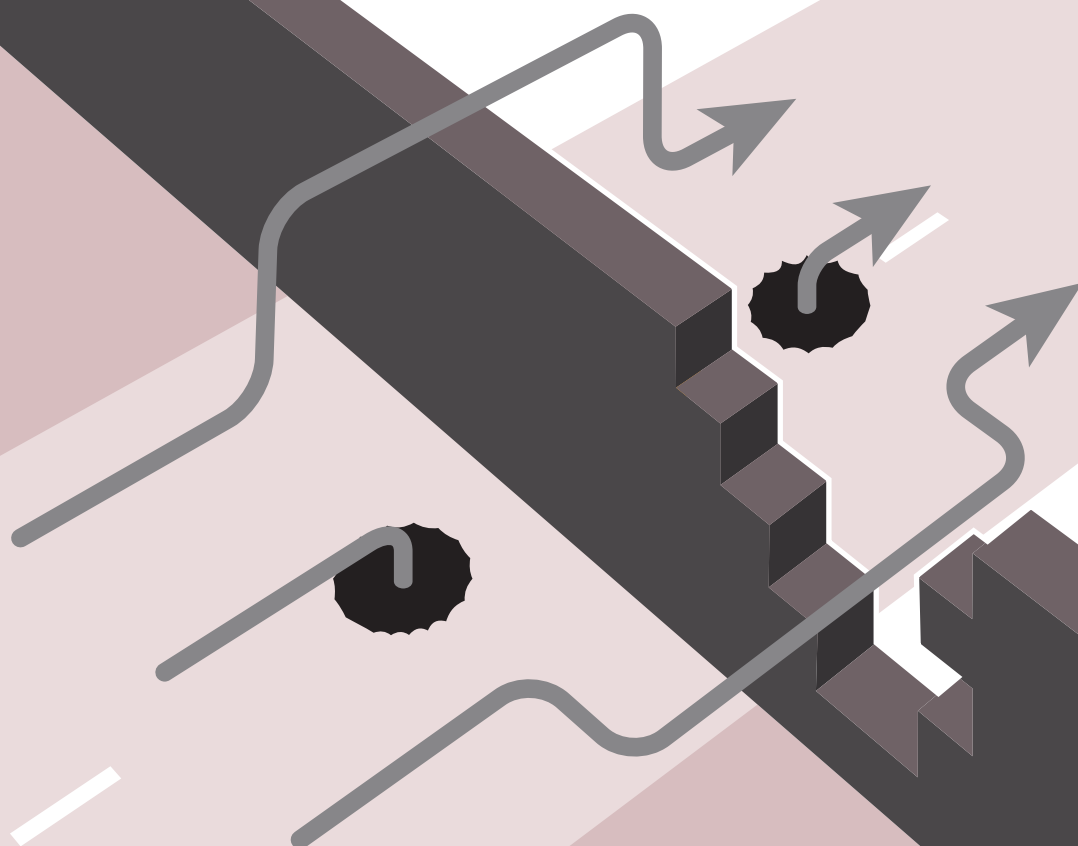


Building Partnerships to Overcome Barriers

Developing Skills to Thrive in a Changing Economy

2014 Policy Advisory



Governor's Workforce Development Council
Policy Solutions that Work for Minnesota

About this Report

The 2014 Policy Advisory is the collaborative work of the GWDC, its policy committees, and staff that began in 2013. It fulfills the GWDC’s legislative responsibilities listed in Minnesota Statute 2013, section 116L.665, subdivision 3. The GWDC acknowledges the following committee chairs and members, in addition to countless other stakeholders, who contributed their time and expertise to developing the recommendations in this report.

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About the Governor’s Workforce Development Council

The Governor’s Workforce Development Council works to strengthen Minnesota’s workforce. Made up of leaders from business, education, labor, community organizations, and government, the GWDC forges practical solutions to Minnesota’s workforce challenges and provides leadership on projects of strategic importance to the state. In particular, the Council ensures employers play an active role in improving education and training programs, and provides a venue for the workforce stakeholders to build a shared vision and strategic alliances.

As Minnesota’s state Workforce Investment Board, the GWDC is mandated and funded by the federal Workforce Investment Act and further defined by *Minnesota Statutes*, section 116L.665.

More information can be found at www.gwdc.org.

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The design and contents of this report were prepared by Nicholas Maryns, with writing assistance and special thanks to Ryan Merz, Alyssa Klein, Nola Speiser, and Connie Ireland.

Building Partnerships to Overcome Barriers

Developing Skills to Thrive in a Changing Economy

Introduction1

Career Pathways
From Random Acts of Excellence
to Strategic Systems Change5

Experiential Learning
Removing Barriers Between School,
Work, and Community9

Net Impact
Improving Workforce Development
Services Through Data 13

Appendix
An Inventory of Career Pathways and
Experiential Learning Activities in Minnesota..... 23

This document can be made in available in alternative formats upon request.



Governor's Workforce Development Council

Policy Solutions that Work for Minnesota

November 2014

Dear Governor Dayton and Members of the Minnesota Legislature,

A skilled workforce is central to Minnesota's economic success. While Minnesota's economy has strengthened since the recession's end, employer needs for a highly-skilled workforce have also grown. Developing the skills of our workforce will help ensure our competitiveness in the new economy, and will require new partnerships across education, workforce development, human services, and our private sector employers.

To that end, we are pleased to present you with the 2014 GWDC policy advisory, *Building Partnerships to Overcome Barriers: Developing Skills to Thrive in a Changing Economy*. The recommendations that follow can help Minnesota to align its vision, policies, and resources toward a competitive, highly-skilled workforce. They offer a common vision for a statewide career pathways strategy, promote and expand high-quality experiential learning opportunities, and champion the use of data to better understand what works and how we can continue to better serve our customers – students, jobseekers, and employers alike.

This report and its recommendations are the product of a yearlong process that engaged hundreds of stakeholders with a broad array of perspectives and expertise. The recommendations build on work of the Skills@Work Initiative and its regional action teams, and complement earlier recommendations presented in the Council's 2012 policy advisory, *All Hands on Deck*. In May of 2014, the Council adopted the recommendations under the leadership of former Chair Inez Wildwood and current Chair Laura Beeth; they are broadly supported and take into account fiscal realities facing our state.

The Governor's Workforce Development Council is ready to provide leadership and support in implementing these recommendations which will result in a highly-skilled and competitive workforce for Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Laura Beeth, Chair

Inez Wildwood, Former Chair

Introduction

In September 2013, Minnesota reached an important milestone: the state recovered all the jobs lost during the recession. Today the state's unemployment rate stands at 4.1 percent—its lowest in seven years. But the jobs Minnesota has gained are not the same jobs it lost. Since the recession started, construction employs 6,100 fewer people, retail employs 14,400 fewer people, and the state still has 23,100 fewer manufacturing jobs than it did at the pre-recession peak. Meanwhile, professional-level jobs in finance, management, and healthcare continue to grow.¹

A skilled workforce is increasingly central to Minnesota's economic success.

Broad trends in technology and globalization are reshaping the economy, reinventing occupations and creating new ones. Employer needs continue to shift toward higher-level skills, specific skill sets in non-portable occupations, and occupations that leverage new technologies.²

Minnesota's diverse and globally-connected economy places the state at the forefront of these changes. Minnesota consistently ranks first or close-to-first in the nation with regard to the level of skills required by employers. Estimates of the percentage of jobs requiring at least some postsecondary education by 2020 vary, ranging as high as 74 percent.³ Minnesota ranks first in skill demand in part because employers have come to expect a top-notch workforce.

Fortunately, levels of educational preparation and attainment in Minnesota also typically outpace the nation's averages. For the population age 25 to 64, 46 percent of Minnesotans had an associate degree or higher, ranking fourth nationwide. Among those age 25 to 44, half had an associate degree or higher in 2012, ranking second behind Massachusetts. Minnesota has also led the nation in average composite ACT scores for eight consecutive years, and 78 percent of graduates go on to postsecondary education within two years of graduation.⁴

Despite underlying strengths, Minnesota faces some significant challenges.

Statewide employment and education statistics mask significant variation and persistent disparities:

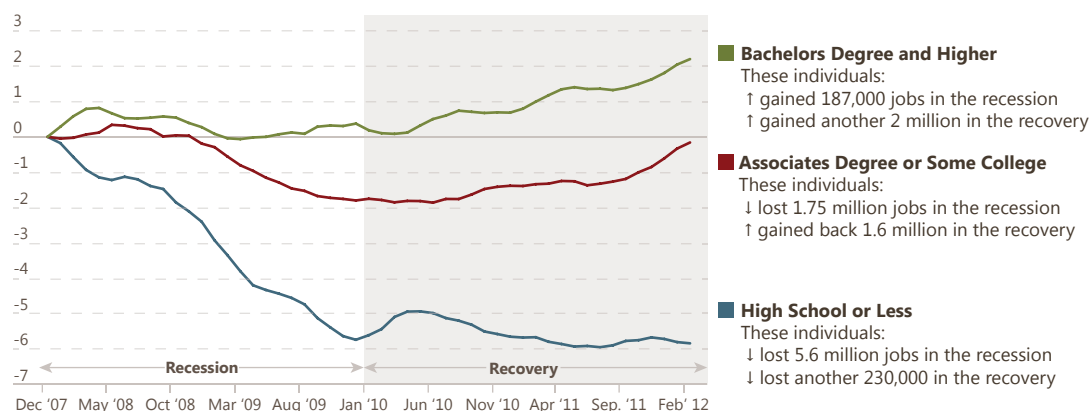
Long-Term Unemployment

The standard measure of unemployment excludes those who have stopped looking for work and those that may be underemployed. While Minnesota's standard unemployment rate is 4.1 percent, the broadest measure of labor force underutilization suggests that one in ten Minnesotans are struggling to secure full-time employment. In particular, the share of long-term unemployed among total Minnesotans unemployed remains well above the pre-recessionary norm. As of April 2014, 38,000 Minnesotans have been without jobs for 6 months or more.⁵

THE RECESSION HASTENED THE SHIFT TOWARD MORE HIGHLY-SKILLED JOBS

Most jobs eliminated during the recession were low-skill, while the vast majority of new jobs created since have required postsecondary education.

Change in Employment by Education (millions)



New Jobs
85% of all new jobs created in the decade after the recession formally ended will require postsecondary education.

Source: The College Advantage, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce; Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Meeting Employer Needs

Minnesota graduates often struggle to find employment at their level of education and in their specific fields of study. Just over a quarter of adult (age 20 and over) workers were employed in a job two or more steps below their educational attainment level in 2012. Less than one-half of graduates with verifiable employment records had full-time jobs during the second year after graduation. Only a minority of recent graduates landed jobs that provide a living wage, health care benefits and an opportunity to save for retirement. On the other hand, short-term programs, mostly certificates, tend to have a high employment rate because they prepare people for work in specific occupations.⁶

Hiring Difficulties

Employers in Minnesota report that 15 percent of job vacancies are hard to fill exclusively because of skill mismatches, with another 21 percent of job vacancies hard to fill due to both skill and job-related issues (e.g. low wages, undesirable hours). Disaggregating the results across levels of education and experience indicates that skill mismatches are more likely due to inadequate levels of (often specialized) experience, rather than inadequate levels of education. This suggests that many students and trainees in Minnesota do not have enough opportunity to gain specific in-demand skills and hands-on experience.⁷

Persistent Disparities

While average employment and education attainment rates in Minnesota are relatively high, these averages mask pernicious and long-standing disparities, particularly along lines of race and ethnicity. Twenty-two percentage points separate the shares of non-Hispanic White and U.S.-born Blacks who work in the paid labor force, the largest gap in the nation.⁸ Blacks were 3½ times more likely to be unemployed than whites in December 2013, with an even larger gap during the recession. Moreover, the downward post-recession trend in black unemployment rates started almost two years after that of whites and Hispanics.⁹ Disparities in the education and training pipeline do not fully explain these differences, but they do play a significant role. The high school graduation rate for white students was 84 percent, but only 49 percent for black students (second to last in the nation), 51 percent for Hispanic students (last in the nation), and 42 percent for American Indian students (last in the nation). And while 43 percent of white students met college ready benchmarks in all four subjects of the ACT in 2013, only 9 percent of black students, 15 percent of American Indian students, and 20 percent of Hispanic students met the same benchmark.¹⁰

A Changing Workforce

Minnesota's workforce is undergoing unprecedented changes. By 2020 workforce growth in Minnesota will slow to nearly zero, a trend fueled by the retirement of the baby boomer generation. By the end of this decade,

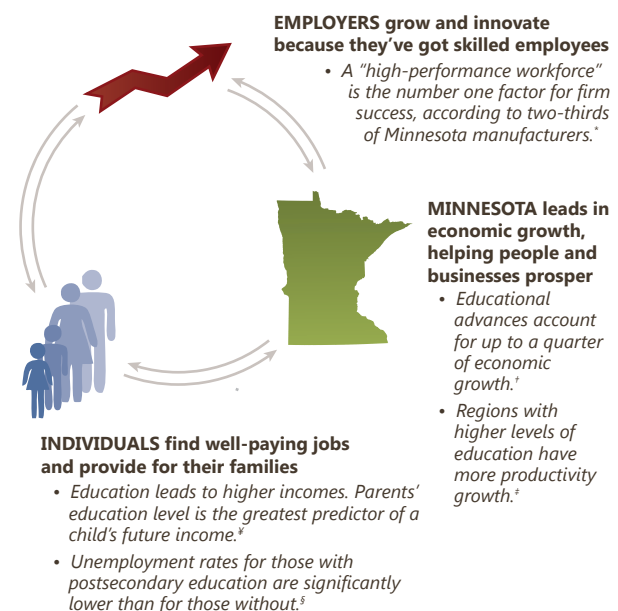
620,000 jobs requiring postsecondary credentials will be vacated and will need to be filled. In addition, Minnesota's workforce is becoming increasingly diverse. From 2000 to 2010, minorities accounted for more than 80 percent of Minnesota's population growth. As Minnesota becomes increasingly diverse, the ill effects of disparities grow greater.¹¹

Workforce development is economic development.

According to former state demographer Tom Gillaspay, our looming workforce shortage means that, economic growth is really going to slow down unless we can pump up productivity growth.¹² Increasing the skills of Minnesotans, particularly those who have been marginalized, is central to increased productivity and therefore economic growth. In other words, the most viable path to economic growth in coming decades is a robust workforce development strategy.

Historically, workforce development and economic development have had different missions and have often worked separately. But our changing economy has prompted new relationships between workforce and economic development, and the increased engagement of employers and industry. Partnerships have grown both at a local and state level, from surveys of employer and

SKILLS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND EMPLOYERS, FUELING A VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF PROSPERITY



¹ Manufacturing Skills Gap Survey. (2011). Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

² Investment in Education: Private and Public Returns. (2000). Joint Economic Study Committee, U.S. Congress.

³ Interpreting the 'One Big Wave' in U.S. Long-Term Productivity Growth. (2000). Robert Gordon, National Bureau of Economic Research.

⁴ Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society. (2007). S. Baum and J. Ma, College Board.

⁵ American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

worker needs, to implementing career readiness certificate programs, to offering new training programs that provide the skilled workers needed for economic growth. For example, Minnesota FastTRAC Adult Career Pathways—a career pathways initiative that fosters partnerships across state agencies and among local partners—provides a framework for how Minnesota can bridge the gap between workforce development and economic development. There are numerous examples of great work underway throughout Minnesota, many of which are cataloged at the end of this report (see page 23). One of the goals of this report is to outline best practices and identify solutions that sustain and build capacity.

Minnesota's partnerships are moving forward but still face barriers.

While skills are increasingly central to Minnesota's economic success, the hallmark of our new economy may be better understood as an accelerating rate of change in the needs of the workforce and increased specialization in new fields. Thus the solution lies not in simply boosting educational attainment across the board or in certain fields, but instead in creating an education and training pipeline that is more responsive to ongoing economic and workforce changes, wherever those changes may take us, and better-equipped to support all students and reduce disparities. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (MnSCU) has begun to address these changes with a number of strategies as found in its *Charting the Future* report.¹³

More than ever before, we need to work more effectively together to ensure an adequate supply of skilled workers for Minnesota's future. To do this, we must confront and overcome barriers to a number of key outcomes:

- Collaboration and innovation at the local, regional, and state levels
- Alignment between the classroom from the world around it, particularly the world of work
- Access to educational and employment opportunities, particularly for traditionally underserved populations
- Integration of workforce development and economic development approaches
- Understanding what works, and how we can better address persistent disparities

Minnesota is a leader with regard to systems change, and the state has several examples of models that close skills gaps, connect jobseekers with jobs, and provide affordable training that boosts our economy (see page 23 for an inventory of promising career pathways and experiential learning initiatives around the state).

Minnesota has well-developed industry partnerships, however there is still a need for further alignment and leveraging of public resources to meet the future workforce needs. By *fostering a comprehensive sector-driven career pathways strategy* (see page 5), we can ensure Minnesota has a talent pipeline that serves the needs of individuals and employers. By *expanding experiential learning opportunities* (see page 9), we can make education and training more relevant and more responsive to the needs of business and industry. By *using data to measure the net impact of workforce services* (see page 13), we can better understand what really works and drive continuous improvement.

Taking these steps will ensure that Minnesota is well-positioned to compete in the new economy. They would also make Minnesota more competitive with regard to federal and philanthropic grant opportunities, which could further support and build capacity for collaborative solutions.

WIOA presents new opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

The recent passage into law of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) presents an opportunity for Minnesota to re-envision how its education and training pipeline serves the needs of individuals, employers, and the broader Minnesota economy.

The law places a renewed focus on a number of important enhancements states and localities can make to strengthen their workforces:

- Deeper coordination across systems and within economic regions with regard to strategic planning and performance measurement
- Innovation in how services are delivered, including career pathways and work-based learning strategies
- Increased alignment to employer needs and industry-based credentials
- Increased programmatic and funding flexibility at the state and local levels

The federal Department of Labor is currently working with states and localities to shape the law—an opportunity for Minnesota to strengthen its position as a national leader and respond to the pressing challenges the state faces.

The timing of WIOA reauthorization coincides with Minnesota's recent acceptance into a National Governors Association (NGA) Policy Academy on *Aligning the Education and Training Pipeline to the Needs of the State Economy*. Through the Policy Academy, Minnesota will receive intensive technical assistance from the NGA and learn from other leading states. In particular, Minnesota will use the Academy to work toward two goals: instituting

a common vision, strategies, and goals across state agencies; and supporting and scaling effective education-industry partnerships.

Along with a host of other systems change efforts underway, WIOA and the NGA Policy Academy represent an exciting window of opportunity for Minnesota.

The goal: alignment of vision, policy, and resources toward a competitive, highly-skilled Minnesota.

The goal of the recommendations that follow is not to establish new systems and programs, but to better coordinate and scale existing successful efforts, reduce duplication, and remove barriers to innovative approaches that address Minnesota's most pressing workforce needs. The name of the game is alignment: alignment between industry needs and education and training offerings; alignment of policies and resources among Minnesota's major education and workforce systems; and more broadly, alignment of vision around key strategic priorities in Minnesota at the state-wide and regional levels.

As was the case with the GWDC's 2012 Policy Advisory, this work really does require *all hands on deck*.¹⁴ Only together can we achieve the vision laid out in this report. The success of approaches like career pathways and experiential learning are heavily dependent on the meaningful engagement of all relevant players, especially employers and industry. Together we can strengthen our talent pipelines, ensuring opportunity for employers and workers alike.

Career Pathways

From Random Acts of Excellence to Strategic Systems Change

A comprehensive sector-driven career pathways strategy benefits Minnesota's employers and workers.

In our increasingly disruptive and knowledge-driven economy, Minnesota must support a robust human capital strategy to ensure its economic competitiveness, address growing disparities, and promote opportunity for business and workers alike. The challenges we face require an education and training system that is more comprehensive in meeting the varied needs of individuals, more responsive to a changing economy, easier to navigate, and more manageable for working learners. By design, the career pathways approach works to address these very issues. Minnesota is already a national career pathways leader, but there is a need to do more to strengthen our approach.

Career pathways are an innovative approach focused on meeting the varied needs of both job seekers and employers.

Career pathways are designed around high-demand sectors and occupations, providing a sequence of educational and training opportunities leading to successively higher levels of employment and earnings. Along the pathway, an array of support services is available to bolster student success—everything from career counseling to transportation assistance to childcare.

A career pathway is a local collaboration between a number of partners, including employers, K-12 and/or postsecondary education, adult basic education, workforce development, and community-based organizations. Working together, these partners meet the various needs of employers and job seekers by aligning resources, building shared capacity, and combining services in synergistic ways that lead to better outcomes. Together, partners can do what no one program could do on its own.

The career pathways movement is growing, and for good reason.

The career pathways approach has had a lot of success around the country, and Minnesota is considered a national leader. At least eleven states are exploring or have adopted career pathways approaches for youth and adults. At the federal level, the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services have demonstrated their shared commitment to promote and invest in career pathways strategies—a commitment reflected in the federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act

(WIOA), which was signed into law on July 22, 2014.¹⁵ Major nonprofit efforts, such as the Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears Initiative, CLASP's Alliance for Quality Career Pathways, and the National Governors Association's *Talent Pipeline Policy Academy*, in which Minnesota was selected to participate, continue to build state and local capacity.¹⁶ These efforts are motivated by research that shows the positive impact of career pathways.¹⁷

Minnesota has many successful career pathways.

The career pathways model is rooted in other longstanding approaches in use around Minnesota, from apprenticeships to programs of study to sector initiatives. Minnesota FastTRAC Adult Career Pathways has been a primary example of a career pathways approach tailored to low-skilled adults. Career and Technical Education (CTE)

CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEMS: SIX KEY ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

Career pathways are a strategy for integrating education, workforce development, and human services, and aligning them to employer needs. By connecting these traditional "silos," we can form a coherent system that provides holistic, comprehensive, and coordinated services.

The U.S. Department of Labor has identified six key activities that state and local partners can undertake to develop and support successful career pathways:



Note: Adapted from the Joint Letter on Career Pathways produced by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health & Human Services.

programs of study have helped bring aspects of career pathways into K-12 and postsecondary education. Other sector-based career pathway collaborations have occurred at the local level, often motivated by a specific employer need and, in recent years, increasingly supported by state appropriations.

However, without a comprehensive career pathways strategy the impact of career pathways initiatives is limited.

In building pathways locally, partners often run into resource and policy challenges originating at the state and federal levels. Prescriptive policies about how public dollars are used limit their application to career pathways models. Varying definitions of success and disparate outcome reporting requirements make it difficult to work collaboratively toward shared goals.

More generally, the structure of government agencies and their respective programs often does not adequately reflect or address the complex needs of individuals. People have messy, complicated lives. Many seeking education and training have multiple of inter-related needs and barriers. We know that addressing these needs holistically leads to better outcomes. But our systems are structured to tackle

these needs separately, often in isolation, and each with its own program and participant eligibility requirements. This makes a holistic approach—and a coherent, easily-navigable system—a challenge.

Minnesota needs an intentional career pathways strategy to build, support, and scale the work of existing local career pathways programs.

A comprehensive career pathways strategy, supported by a partnership representing its many stakeholders, would seek to change the way we do business not by creating new programs and bureaucracies, but by aligning policies and existing capacity for better outcomes. It would be a collaborative response to structural challenges that limit the effectiveness of our work.

Collaboration can lead to synergies, better outcomes, and cost savings.

Specifically, a *career pathways partnership* would foster the kind of meaningful collaboration that helps us do more with less. Minnesota has begun to develop strategies, for example through the work of the Itasca Workforce Alignment Project. In the fall of 2014, the Itasca Project will release findings based on a number of pilot projects

SPOTLIGHT

Anoka County Health Care Pathways

Xinyuan Zhang: A Success Story

Xin was referred by Metro North Adult Basic Education, one of the partners in the Health Care Pathways program (see page 27 for more information) as she was interested in working in Health Care and knew that training to be a Nursing Assistant would be a great place to start.

She was worried when she started the program that she would not be able to keep up, as English is her second language. Xin was a great student and kept detailed notes. She asked for help and found that the extra support of her ABE instructor, Diane and the WorkForce Center Navigator, Marsha, were very helpful. Xin was voted the hardest worker in her class by her classmates. Xin was a straight A student.

Amy, WorkForce Center Coordinator encouraged her throughout the program and helped her with her resume as Xin again was concerned with her lack of work experience in the U.S. that it would be difficult for her to get a job. Xin had 2 interviews within 2 weeks of graduation and was offered a job at Crest View Senior Communities as a Nursing Assistant making over \$11 an hour. Xin is planning on continuing her education at Anoka Technical College, where she obtained her CNA, BLS and First Aid Training.

Via email, Xin writes, Thank you again! I am really happy that I had the opportunity to complete the health care pathway program, this program did more than just help me get my CNA certificate, I want to let you know that I have made huge progress on my studies due to your help, I couldn't do it without the encouragement from all of you, and please accept my sincere thanks for the time and patience I received from you. You are doing a wonderful job! I really appreciate it!



Amy, Xin, and Diane

aimed at specific information and process challenges faced by workforce decision-makers.¹⁸

By aligning policies and resources, we can improve and streamline services. By working together toward common goals and outcomes, with strong employer engagement, our systems can be more innovative and more effective.

The first step Minnesota must take is to develop a shared vision of the career pathways approach.

One challenge facing the career pathways movement is a lack of common vision, language, and outcomes around the broader concept of career pathways. The term career pathways is used often, but often with varying meanings, target populations, and goals in mind. Many programs

can be described as career pathways programs, but there is a lack of consensus about what that means and how to measure success.

Defining career pathways is about striking the right balance between specificity and flexibility. Any vision or definition must be specific enough to get a myriad of stakeholders on the same page toward shared, actionable solutions, but be flexible enough to account for solutions tailor-made to local and regional workforce challenges.

Thus we offer the following vision (see below) for career pathways in Minnesota. This vision is meant to serve as a common starting point for a variety of career pathways models serving a variety of populations, from which more operational definitions and outcomes can be defined.

A Shared Vision of Career Pathways in Minnesota

This broad and inclusive vision of the career pathways approach was developed by a wide array of stakeholders to be a common conceptual starting point for defining more specific strategies, target populations, and quality measures.

The CAREER PATHWAYS APPROACH* connects progressive levels of education, training, and supportive services in a way that optimizes the progress and success of individuals in specific sectors or cross-sector occupations, helps employers meet their workforce needs, and strengthens the economy by fostering inclusive prosperity and reducing disparities.

The career pathways approach is defined by the following broad characteristics:

Responsive to Labor Market

Significant employer engagement is a hallmark of the career pathways approach, along with the use of labor market information, to maintain an intentional focus on the changing needs of the labor market.

Focused on Participant Needs Holistically

Career pathways take into account the broad array of needs of their participants, assessing progress and addressing barriers to educational and employment outcomes through collaborative approaches and supportive services.

Sequential, Connected, and Stackable

Career pathways are easy for participants to navigate because they have multiple on-ramps and an intentional focus on connections and transitions between programs. Educational offerings are sequential, credential-based† and stackable, and where appropriate, modular or bite-sized. Off-ramps to employment after credential attainment are guided with a focus on retention and success.

Continuous Evolution/Improvement

Career pathways use data to understand results, what works, and the (often changing) needs of participants, employers, and the economy.

CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAMS are the building blocks of a career pathways system, and can take many forms and serve a variety of populations at any skill level. A career pathways program is supportive of, connected to, and plays a collaborative role with other programs within the system.

A CAREER PATHWAYS STRATEGY intentionally supports a network of programs and education/training offerings sharing the career pathways approach, with an overarching structure that facilitates synergies, collaboration, the alignment of resources and policies, and communities of learning and practice.

* Adapted from the Alliance Quality Career Pathways (AQCP) definition.

† Credentials are broadly defined, but should be responsive to labor market needs, i.e. industry-recognized.

CAREER PATHWAYS RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal: Minnesota has a statewide, sector-based career pathways strategy

Minnesota needs a high-quality, integrated, sector-based career pathways strategy. To continue building toward that end, **Minnesota should establish a career pathways partnership to provide leadership and guidance that supports, builds, and sustains local and regional career pathways partnerships as part of a statewide strategy.**¹⁹ This strategy should serve all individuals and prioritize areas of greatest need, addressing employment disparities and skills gaps.



RECOMMENDATION 1: Partnerships

The career pathways partnership should be representative of existing state, local, and regional career pathways partnerships. Partnerships should consist of state and local decision-makers from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors that represent the workforce development system and its stakeholders, broadly defined.



RECOMMENDATION 2: Shared Vision, Goals, and Criteria

The Partnership should adopt and commit to a shared vision, guiding principles, goals, and strategies for Minnesota, and identify the fundamental components and measurable outcomes of a successful career pathways system.



RECOMMENDATION 3: Policy Alignment

Partnership members should commit their support through the alignment of policies that reduce barriers to building, scaling, and sustaining a career pathways system at all levels. Partnership members should embed the shared vision, strategy, and goals into their respective plans. The Partnership should make recommendations and provide guidance to state policy makers to support building and sustaining a career pathways system and programs.

The Partnership should provide guidance to ensure numerous entry and exit points for individuals and clear transitions between educational offerings. Policies and practices should be regularly reassessed for continuous improvement. The Partnership should also review and analyze data on participant progress and outcomes to inform policy, practice, and funding.



RECOMMENDATION 4: Resource Alignment

The Partnership should provide leadership to guide the alignment of resources that support, build, and sustain career pathways approaches. The Partnership should recommend a funding plan for career pathways programs. The funding plan should augment other federal and state funding streams, providing flexible dollars to fill in funding gaps.

Partnership members and other stakeholders should leverage federal, state and philanthropic resources to support career pathways systems and programs. The Partnership should convene stakeholders in response to funding opportunities to lead collaborative proposals that build capacity or foster new approaches for Minnesota's career pathways system.²⁰

Experiential Learning

Removing Barriers Between School, Work, and Community

“Why are we learning this?”

Many a student, frustrated and unable to see the relevance of what they are learning, have uttered this question.

All too often, education and training are too far removed from the real world. When learning lacks relevance, students are more likely to disengage and less likely to succeed. They are less likely to find the spark that generates excitement, illuminates possibilities, and helps them see their place in the world and in the workforce.

Experiential learning breaks down walls between the classroom and the world beyond.

Experiential learning can take a lot of different forms, from focused practice of a specific on-the-job skill to more open-ended group projects that address a broader community concern. In any case, experiential learning helps students gain skills by carrying out and reflecting upon activities in a real-world context, often in collaboration with an employer. High-quality experiential learning opportunities offer in-depth classroom and workplace integration as well training tailored to student and employer needs.

Efforts to promote and expand experiential learning strategies are growing at all levels, from local community partnerships to the White House.²¹ Minnesota faces both an opportunity and a challenge to make our current

education and training systems friendlier to experiential learning. This should be a priority for Minnesota, given the many benefits experiential learning presents to employers, students, and the system as a whole.

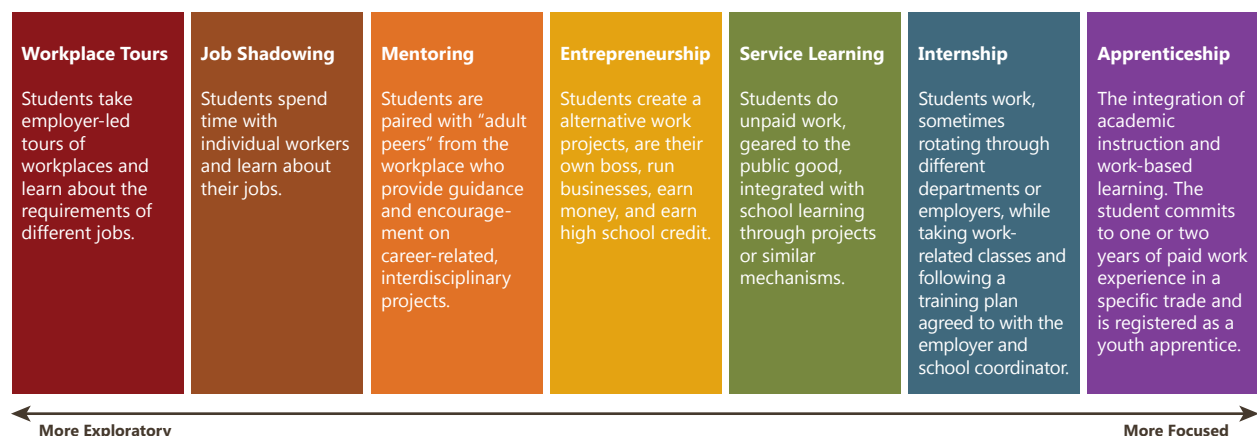
Experiential learning offers adult and youth students real world experiences and workplace-relevant coursework.

Employers are increasingly looking for candidates with on-the-job experience and specific competencies in specialized areas; employer surveys in Minnesota suggest that hiring difficulties often have to do with gaps in this kind of specialized, hands-on experience.²²

This poses a challenge particularly for young students and for adults who are pursuing a new career. Experiential learning can provide the first step along a career pathway for those with limited work history or industry experience by allowing them to gain work skills and relevant experience. As an instructional practice, it gives students the chance to encounter learning opportunities and challenges as they might on the job or in the community, helping them to fine-tune skills learned in more traditional settings. Furthermore, for working learners, many experiential learning strategies involve an earn while you learn component that can make training more accessible.

A SPECTRUM OF WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Work-based learning is experiential and career-focused, and offers many options for youth and adults – some of which are shown here. Each form of work-based learning can vary widely in its scope and design.



Note: Adapted from an original chart created by the Minnesota Department of Education.

By helping students of all ages see the relevance of their learning outside the classroom, experiential learning and other work-based learning strategies boost student interest, morale, and engagement.²³ Experiential learning also helps youth explore careers and improve their educational decision-making. Importantly, experiential learning can be an effective strategy for engaging those who face barriers to employment by giving them a chance to display their abilities to employers. For example, studies show that internships and similar work experience models contribute to greater job success and higher wages for youth with disabilities.²⁴

Experiential learning offers employers an industry-aligned workforce and the opportunity to interact with future employees.

Experiential learning helps give employers access to candidates trained in the business needs of their company or industry. Because it integrates academics and workplace learning, experiential learning models help educational institutions better align training with specific employer needs. In the information technology industry, for example, many employers use specific software packages. Through offering internships or project-based learning opportunities, companies can help potential future employees gain experience with these software packages.

Experiential learning also allows employers to work with a pool of students interested in training in their field. This presents an opportunity to build talent pipelines by developing relationships with future employees. It also gives both employers and students the opportunity to test the waters with each other.

Experiential learning offers Minnesota's workforce development system cost-effective, industry-aligned training.

Since experiential learning can be integrated into existing education and training offerings, it represents an effective and low-cost solution. Net impact evaluations have demonstrated the effectiveness of one major form of experiential learning—apprenticeships—above other training strategies, including traditional classroom instruction. The benefits of apprenticeships far outweigh their costs, with participants experiencing an increase of \$2,700 in quarterly earnings compared against similar nonparticipants.²⁵

Precisely because experiential learning is attuned to the needs of employers and the broader economy, it can be a powerful tool in addressing skills gaps. With Minnesota's rapidly evolving economy, experiential learning can help ensure Minnesota's workforce development services are responsive to changes in training needs.

Defining Experiential Learning

Experiential learning helps ensure that participants are suitably and professionally prepared for an effective and efficient transition into or through a career pathway (broadly defined) with the ultimate goal of employment in a career that offers family-sustaining wages and opportunity for advancement.

We define experiential learning as any learning opportunity that:

- Allows participants to apply and fine-tune skills learned in the classroom or other traditional settings, including career-specific skills and essential work readiness skills.
- Gives participants exposure to work (or work-like) settings and offers participants direct and systemic employer, community, or customer feedback.
- Requires in-depth engagement, preparation, and reflection (i.e. it is more than just a one-time experience), and provides the opportunity to explore interests and talents.
- Demonstrates the connection back to related classroom learning, making it more relevant to the participant.

When we refer to experiential learning opportunities, we refer to a broad array of experiences, including those leading to credentials, such as:

- Internships
- Apprenticeships
- Project-based learning
- Problem-based learning
- Service learning
- Field study/practicums
- On-the-job training
- Job shadowing
- Other work-based learning experiences

Lots of opportunities for experiential learning exist; the challenge is connecting the dots.

Many employers, educational institutions, and community organizations want to build experiential learning opportunities, but it is often difficult to know where to start, and how to connect with other organizations in their region. Minnesota should find ways to make participation in experiential learning easy for employers by facilitating relationships with employers, removing the administrative difficulties associated with providing work-based experiences, and promoting best practices. Many successful individual programs, such as the M-Powered program at Hennepin Technical and Community College, have overcome these barriers, but Minnesota will miss other opportunities and should do more to support and encourage these efforts systematically.

Individuals seeking experiential learning opportunities also face the challenge of connecting with the right opportunity. And while employers can go to lengths establishing an internship or on-the-job training program, they still face the barrier of recruiting motivated, well-prepared candidates. Minnesota can further support engagement in experiential learning by increasing awareness of existing opportunities and connecting individuals with employers. Minnesota has great examples of how to do this within specific sectors, including the Steer Your Career exploration guide, the IT Discovery Network, and InternBemidji. Moreover, through MinnesotaWorks.net, Minnesota already has a system where employers can post job openings and job seekers can find opportunities, including internships and apprenticeships. Expanding and promoting MinnesotaWorks.net's function as a statewide clearinghouse for experiential learning opportunities would represent a clear step forward, reducing both barriers and duplication.

Minnesota should remove systemic barriers and clarify resources available for experiential learning.

Local partners face an array of state and federal workforce development programs with varying resources available for experiential learning opportunities. State program leadership should align policies where possible, clarify what is available under statewide policies, and encourage local areas to develop regional policies that do the same.

Barriers to experiential learning exist throughout the education and workforce development system. State statutes create barriers to experiential learning and work-based training for individuals receiving unemployment insurance benefits. Individuals are ineligible for benefits if they are employed 32 hours or more per week, including volunteering, internships and on-the-job training, whether paid or not.²⁶ This limits the types of opportunities that individuals can pursue on their way back to full-time paid employment.

Barriers also exist in the K-12 education system. For example, in order to provide credit bearing experiential learning, any effort must be part of an approved work-based learning program overseen by a licensed work-based learning teacher. This endorsement is important and ensures quality as well as student safety, but it also reduces the number of students who have access to credit-based experiential learning programs. Another barrier that needs to be addressed, particularly with regard to youth, is transportation. Experiential learning often requires getting from a classroom to a job-site and a lack of transportation options can keep students from participating.

Fortunately, Minnesota has started to address some of these barriers. For example, previous policy ambiguity about whether apprenticeship training is an allowable training expense in Workforce Investment Act programs discouraged the use of apprenticeships. In response to

this concern, DOL provided guidance encouraging states to remove barriers between the workforce development system and apprenticeships training.²⁷ Minnesota followed up on this guidance with statewide policies facilitating the use of apprenticeships as a training method among local partners.²⁸

Experiential Learning Recommendations

Goal: Support and expand the availability of high-quality experiential learning opportunities for all individuals and employers.



RECOMMENDATION 1: Experiential Learning Connectors

Minnesota should establish a network of Experiential Learning Connectors at the local and/or regional level—professionals who work with employers and associations, K-12 and postsecondary educational institutions, local workforce investment boards, and others to identify and develop experiential learning opportunities that lead to future employment or credential attainment. Existing staff among local partners may already have the capacity to do this work, but a more targeted and intentional network of connectors will result in a greater impact.



RECOMMENDATION 2: Minnesota Experiential Learning Exchange

Minnesota should establish an Experiential Learning Exchange for high school and postsecondary students and adults, utilizing the existing capacity of www.MinnesotaWorks.net. This Exchange should facilitate the matching of individuals with nearby experiential learning opportunities.



RECOMMENDATION 3: Supportive Policies and Practices

Entities whose work is developing Minnesota's workforce should prioritize the alignment of policies and practices and remove barriers that inhibit access to high-quality experiential learning opportunities, especially those that are credit-bearing or that lead to an industry-recognized credential.



RECOMMENDATION 4: Training and Supporting Educators

Minnesota should prioritize training and support for educators to create high-quality experiential learning opportunities for all high school and postsecondary students both inside and outside the classroom.

4.a: Teachers in the Workplace. The state should encourage teachers to participate in workplace-related experiences that inform and enhance their curriculum and instruction practices. These workplace experiences could be modeled after and scaled from successful educator in the workplace initiatives, such as those in Brainerd, Rochester and Northeast Minnesota.

4.b: Expanding Access to the Work-based Learning Endorsement. All individuals holding an education license should be eligible to earn the Work-based Learning Endorsement. This would expand capacity by allowing education professionals, such as counselors, adult basic education teachers, and administrators to provide approved credit-bearing, work-based learning programs. Educators already engaged in experiential learning activities should be able to leverage their experience towards earning the endorsement, whether by measuring their competency through assessment, portfolio completion, or another form of credit for their experiential learning.



RECOMMENDATION 5: Experiential Learning Credit Requirement

Every high school student in Minnesota should have the opportunity to earn credit for high-quality experiential learning. Schools, with the engagement of employers, should identify a variety of high-quality, credit-bearing experiential learning opportunities to offer students during the school year, breaks, and summer.



RECOMMENDATION 6: Minnesota Experiential Learning Resources

Minnesota should dedicate resources to increase high-quality, experiential learning opportunities for both youth and adults. These resources should support the activities outlined in the previous recommendations as well as:

- Preparatory and reflective seminars for experiential learning participants
- Data collection and evaluation
- Transportation options for experiential learning participants
- Fund administrator(s) should be required to measure and report the impact and effectiveness of the fund to the legislature on a regular basis.

Net Impact

Improving Workforce Development Services Through Data

Net impact evaluation can help guide workforce strategy and investment.

The Net Impact Framework is a new tool, developed by the GWDC in conjunction with a broad group of stakeholders and evaluation experts, that uses available data to understand program impacts, aid in continuous improvement, and support evidence-based policy making.

The framework uses state-of-the-art statistical techniques to evaluate participant outcomes against the outcomes of similar nonparticipants. It is designed to produce insights on two fundamental types of questions:

- *What works?* What kinds of services and approaches have the greatest impact on participants?
- *Who is impacted?* How do services impact different populations, and how can disparities be mitigated?

The framework increases the transparency and accountability of public investments in workforce development, and demonstrates the value of these investments to participants and the broader public. It empowers and improves our efforts to serve jobseekers, students, employers, and industry.

Effective investments in skills are more important than ever.

As we continue our transition toward a global, knowledge-driven economy, effective evidence-based investments that develop the skills of Minnesotans are increasingly central to our shared prosperity. Workforce employment and training programs have long helped Minnesotans gain skills and find better jobs, and many have endeavored to measure their impact and return on investment in one way or another. Yet there has been no standardization of

About the Net Impact Framework

First of all, what is net impact?

In short, *net impact means looking at the outcomes of program participants compared against a control group of similar nonparticipants*. It accounts for factors like participant demographics, work history, and local economic conditions, isolating the impact of the program itself.

Evaluation Design

Using data available at the state level, the framework employs a propensity score matching technique to match participants with similar nonparticipants. A difference-in-differences estimation technique helps to account for other unobservable differences factors, such as personal motivation or the strength of professional networks.

Major Features of the Framework

Standardization

The framework measures net impacts in a standardized way across all programs. This makes the results more transparent and useful, but it also means that understanding the context around each program (e.g. who is served, local economic conditions) is paramount when interpreting the findings.

An Array of Outcomes

The framework analyzes the net impacts of workforce programs across a wide array of outcomes:

- Employment and earnings
- Usage of public benefits
- Taxes paid
- Incarceration/recidivism

Disaggregated Results

Results can be broken down to provide greater insights and dimensionality. Results can be disaggregated based on:

- *Participant characteristics*, like race, gender, or educational attainment.
- *Program characteristics*, such as target population, program intensity, types of services provided, and geography.

Impacts over Time

Using quarterly data, the framework helps us discern trends and understand how net impacts persist over time.

Return on Investment

Net impacts are translated into dollars and cents in a standardized way, allowing us to understand the costs and benefits of programs and their outcomes. We look at costs and benefits from the participant and taxpayer points of view. This allows us to gauge the real value of programs to participants and the return on taxpayer investments (see page 17).

For more information on the methodology, see <http://www.gwdc.org/docs/roi/Net-Impact-Eval-Design-Summary.doc>.

how this is done across programs. At the same time, very few rigorous evaluations of the true net impact have been carried out, let alone embedded into ongoing performance management practices. This has limited our ability to understand and replicate what works.

Using standardized net impact evaluation, Minnesota's workforce development system can cost-effectively model the practice of *performance management*, a common business practice that uses available data to analyze business processes and continually improve customer value. Net impact evaluation of programs can help us identify opportunities to do more with our limited resources. We owe it to those we serve and the taxpayers who fund this important work.

Minnesota is at the forefront of a national movement.

Across the country, workforce development programs are harnessing the power of data and net impact evaluation methods to help drive strategy and investment. At least half a dozen states have used net impact evaluation to understand and improve the outcomes of workforce services.²⁹ The federal Department of Labor has commissioned a number of net impact studies in recent years, and as part of its Workforce Innovation Fund, has awarded grants to states to develop pay for success projects built on the net impact approach. Other national efforts, such as the Results for America, the Benchmarking Project, and America Achieves, also support efforts to expand the use of data and net impact evaluation.

The work described here builds on these efforts and cutting-edge statistical techniques, representing a step forward in the field of workforce program evaluation. Many states are looking to Minnesota for leadership and innovation in this area.

The net impact framework has been developed collaboratively with broad input.

The GWDC first convened an advisory group to develop a net impact and return on investment (ROI) framework in 2009, in alignment with its statutory role to:

*Advise the governor on the development and implementation of statewide and local performance standards and measures relating to applicable federal human resource programs and the coordination of performance standards and measures among programs.*³⁰

SPOTLIGHT

Washington State Institute for Public Policy: Using Evidence to Drive Impact

"Based on our rough calculations, less than \$1 out of every \$100 of government spending is backed by even the most basic evidence that the money is being spent wisely."

- Peter Orszag and John Bridgeland
The Atlantic Monthly, July 2013

Every investor benefits from an impartial advisor, particularly one that examines all relevant information and provides cost-effective advice. The investments of federal and state governments are some of the most important we make as a society, yet policymakers often lack the kind of advice that most investors rely on.

Motivated by this realization, the Washington state legislature created the Washington State Institute on Public Policy (WSIPP) to provide practical, non-partisan analysis and recommendations on important public policy issues. Driven by a Board of Directors representing the legislature, governor, and public universities, WSIPP helps the state legislature make policy decisions based on performance rather than anecdote or politics.

Founded in 1983, WSIPP often bills itself as the state's "investment advisor". It calculates the return on investment of existing and potential public policy options, taking into account the short- and long-term effects on taxpayers, program participants, and the broader public.

The hallmarks of the WSIPP approach include:

- Cross-party governance to ensure impartiality and credibility
- Analyses of issues and evidence across agency silos, encouraging collaborative, system-wide approaches that work
- A focus on user-friendly analysis so even laypeople can understand the costs and benefits
- A standardized approach to analyzing and presenting results – a benefit of a single, durable institute

Washington State has reaped the benefits of using an evidence-based approach to policy making. In the area of criminal justice, for instance, policies recommended by WSIPP and adopted by the state since 2000 are expected to save taxpayers and crime victims \$2.77 billion by 2050. These policies, representing a six-fold return on investment, have led to 1,200 fewer people in state prisons, bucking the national trend.

In contrast to these significant cost savings, WSIPP's budget is relatively small – roughly \$1.5 million annually to support eleven analysts. Notably, though the state budget shrank during the recession, WSIPP saw its workload increase precisely because the institute helps the state do more with less. For these reasons, other states are working to replicate the model, and the Pew Center on the States is providing technical assistance to expand the use of its cost/benefit approach to other states.

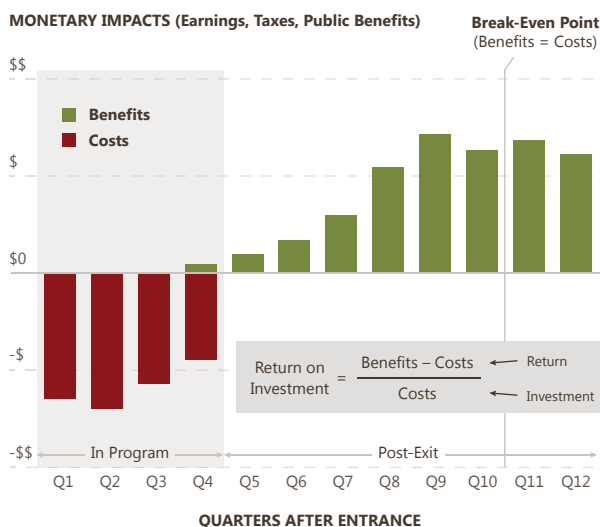
Learn more at www.wsipp.wa.gov

Made up of a diverse array of stakeholders, including key staff from relevant state agencies, workforce development service providers, business members, community-based organizations, and data evaluation experts, the GWDC staff-led advisory group set out to develop a standard return on investment methodology that can be applied to workforce programs administered or funded by public dollars.³¹

To guide their work, the advisory group agreed to a number of shared values and goals for the methodology, namely that it should be transparent and credible, adaptable and sensitive to change, relatively simple to administer, and yield timely and relevant results. The advisory group also developed the broad parameters of the framework, such as which outcomes to measure, how to measure them, and how to estimate associated costs and benefits for the purpose of return on investment analyses. In doing so, the group balanced the varied interests and perspectives of its members to develop a consensus-based framework ready for implementation.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT: WEIGHING COSTS AND BENEFITS

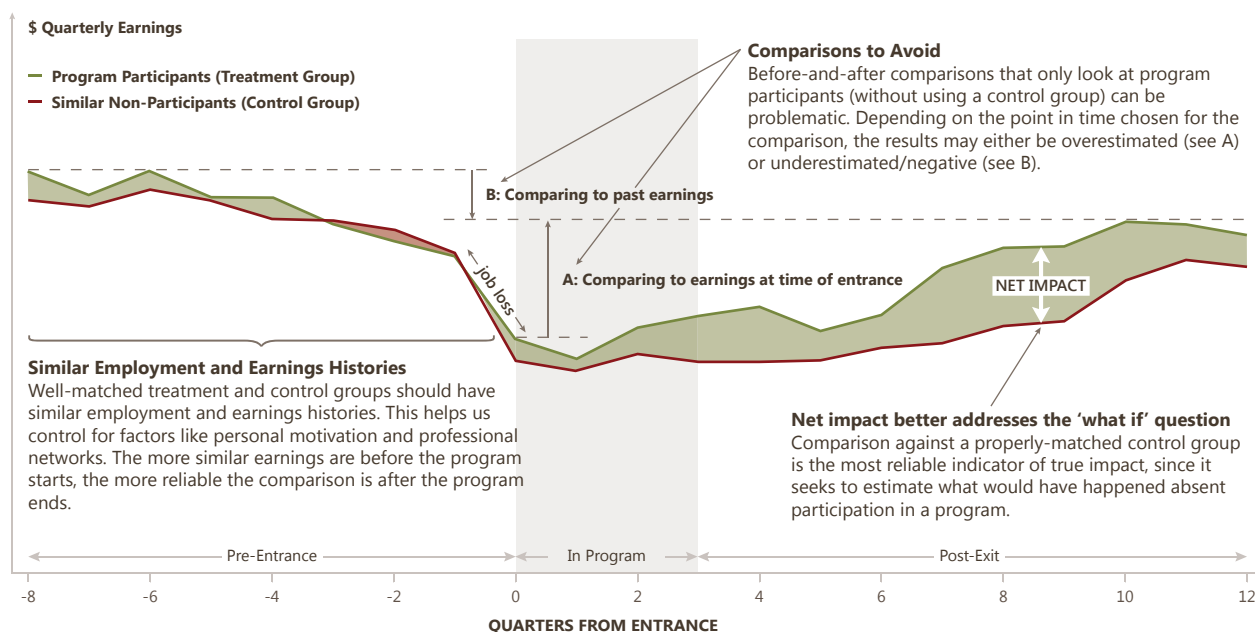
When a business or individual makes an investment decision, they consider the amount of money the investment will make relative to the initial cost of the investment. This ratio of the amount gained (or lost) to the initial amount invested is known as return on investment (ROI). For example, an ROI of seven percent (.07) means that every dollar invested returns seven cents of profit on top of returning the initial investment.



Note: The above chart is for illustrative purposes only and does not reflect actual data or outcomes. However, the overall pattern is typical: costs accrue early on while the program serves an individual, with benefits accruing later as individuals move back into the workforce.

UNDERSTANDING NET IMPACT: COMPARISONS THAT ILLUMINATE AND COMPARISONS TO AVOID

To better understand the true impact of workforce education and training programs, program participants are compared to other individuals who are similar with regard to demographics and employment history, but who have not participated in a program.



Note: The above chart is for illustrative purposes only and does not reflect actual data or outcomes. However, the overall pattern is typical: average quarterly earnings among program participants typically decrease significantly the 1-2 quarters preceding entrance into a program, signifying job losses and/or reduced hours.

Five Lessons on Net Impact and Performance Management

Thoughtful implementation of the framework will ensure its value.

For the net impact framework to have a true impact, it has to be credible, consulted thoughtfully, and useful to a wide array of audiences. Here are five lessons we have learned in developing the net impact framework:

LESSON 1

Net impact is but one tool of many necessary to understand the value of workforce programs.

Every tool has its limitations. While the framework provides important data-driven insights, it does not tell us everything we need to know to understand complex programs and diverse participants. It is one of several tools decision makers should use to assess workforce strategies and investments. Those using this framework should understand its purpose and limitations, and use it in the context of other tools, considerations, and available information.

LESSON 2

Performance metrics are most useful when they are actively integrated into ongoing continuous improvement efforts.

Many one-time net impact evaluations are valuable for a time, only to end up as footnotes. The information and insights generated by the framework do not themselves lead to continuous improvement, but are instead the start of a more informed conversation about what works and for whom. Commissioners, organizational leads, and cross-functional teams should meet at regular intervals to review net impact findings and to develop strategies and plans for continuous improvement.

LESSON 3

Good performance looks different for different programs.

A standardized net impact methodology invites comparisons between programs that vary in terms of who they serve, their programmatic goals, and their local conditions. Impacts across programs may vary significantly, but differences don't necessarily imply that one program is better than another. The goal is to encourage the right kinds of comparisons. Ideally, a program is compared to itself over time, to other very similar programs, or to impact targets that take into account the many particulars of any given program.

LESSON 4

Results should be timely and responsive.

Rigorous net-impact analyses can require years to collect the necessary data. This creates major lags in the feedback loop, making important insights harder to discern and react to in a timely fashion. This is a challenge particularly to service providers, who are interested in using real-time data to understand and improve their performance. Leading indicators that help predict longer-term outcomes can be used to address this issue.

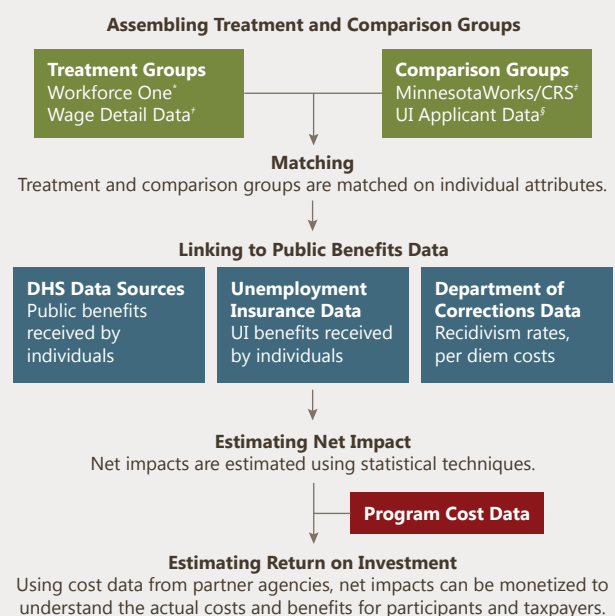
LESSON 5

Investments in data systems can pay large dividends in the long term.

The framework is very data intensive. To operate more smoothly, improvements to data management infrastructure and policy need to be made. First, state statutes do not allow for the ongoing sharing of individual-level data across relevant state agencies for the purposes of performance measurement and continuous improvement. Currently, these types of analyses can only be built around one-time data sharing arrangements for research purposes, requiring a partial reinvention of the wheel each time. Second, inconsistencies in how (and whether) data are reported and defined reduce the validity of standardized performance measures. Third, the pilot project has highlighted the need for more robust, integrated, and user-friendly data systems at the state level. Recent and ongoing efforts like the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) and the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLEDs) are moving Minnesota in the right direction, but additional support would be beneficial, particularly in terms of reducing long-term costs.

THE NET IMPACT DATA PROCESS

Strong partnerships among state agencies and service providers are key.



^a Workforce One is DEED's case management system for workforce programs.

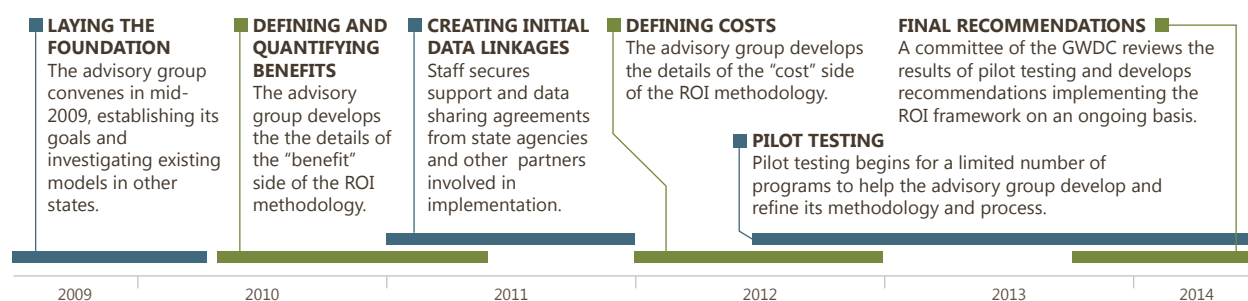
^b Refers to data on taxable wages and employment collected from employers on a quarterly basis and required by the federal Unemployment Insurance program.

^c These datasets provide information on those registering online or at a Workforce Center but not receiving services from eligibility-based programs.

^d The Minnesota Unemployment Insurance program provides data on individuals who have lost their jobs and have applied for benefits (whether or not they receive them).

INITIATIVE TIMELINE

The Governor's Workforce Development Council first convened an advisory group on net impact and return on investment in the summer of 2009. The group consists of a diverse array of stakeholders and experts with the goal of developing a standardized net impact/ROI methodology that can be applied to workforce programs administered or funded by public dollars, including nonprofit programs that receive passthrough funding.



A proof-of-concept pilot evaluation is currently underway, to be completed in late 2014.

In 2011, the advisory group began to lay the groundwork for a pilot evaluation. The goal of the pilot has been to inform the development of a high-quality framework, and to establish the necessary data procedures to make way for a full implementation of the framework. This has involved building partnerships with various state agencies, getting to know their programs, and establishing linkages between their many data systems. Inconsistencies in how (and whether) data are reported and defined across these systems have been a challenge, requiring a great deal of work to standardize the data and prepare it for analysis. That said, the beauty of the approach has been that it uses data that are already available; it does not require service providers to collect additional data, nor for program participants to self-report it.

The GWDC is currently finishing the pilot, which is attempting to analyze the net impacts of selected workforce programs operating between 2007 and 2012, including the WIA Adult Program, the WIA and Minnesota Dislocated Worker Programs, and Minnesota FastTRAC Adult Career Pathways. Program participants are analyzed against comparison groups constructed from similar nonparticipants who applied for unemployment insurance benefits or who registered at a work force center or online at MinnesotaWorks.net. Preliminary analyses suggest broadly positive net outcomes on participant employment and earnings.

The forthcoming pilot report will detail the evaluation design, its final results, and underlying data methods used to produce them.

A Closer Look: Benefit- and Cost-Accounting for Different Groups

The net impact framework accounts for costs and benefits to different groups. This table is for illustrative purposes only; actual effects may differ.

Benefit Categories	Training Participant	Taxpayers [*]	Society [†]
Change in Earnings and Fringe Benefits	Earnings up	No effect	Overall earnings up
Change in Taxes (Federal and State Income, Sales, and Payroll)	More taxes paid	Tax revenues up	No overall effect
Change in Public Benefits (e.g. MFIP, SNAP, MA, MinnesotaCare, UI)	Less benefits received	Greater savings	No overall effect
Change in Incarceration Costs	No effect	Greater savings	Greater savings
Change in Worker Productivity	Greater productivity	No effect	Greater productivity
Cost Categories	Training Participant	Taxpayers [*]	Society [†]
Program Expenditures	N/A	Cost to taxpayers	Cost to taxpayers
Foregone Participant Earnings While in Training	Cost to participant	N/A	Cost to participants
Foregone Tax Receipts While in Training	N/A	Cost to taxpayers	Cost to taxpayers
Tuition Costs Paid by Participant	Cost to participant	N/A	Cost to participants

^{*}Taxpayers is broadly defined to mean all individuals who are not training participants.

[†]Society is a combination of taxpayers and training participants and thus makes up all Minnesotans.

Estimated Costs of Implementing the Net Impact Framework

The costs outlined below cover a one-time set of analyses as described in this report, including net impact estimates, disaggregated results across a variety of dimensions, return on investment analyses, and a final report with technical appendices, as carried out by GWDC staff and contractors.* The analyses would cover all programs in the Minnesota Workforce Inventory.†

Budget Item	Cost
Data Evaluation <i>Preparing data, completing the evaluation, and producing a technical report</i>	\$140,000
In-House Staff <i>Project coordination, support, and communications; preparation of social return on investment estimates</i>	\$80,000
Data Extraction and Data Sharing Agreements <i>Staff and technology costs associated with extracting data from partner agencies (DEED, DHS, DOC, MN.IT)</i>	\$25,000
Hardware and Software <i>Necessary purchases and upgrades</i>	\$5,000
Printing Costs <i>Final reports, fact sheets, and other printed materials</i>	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$253,000

* Longer-term investments in the net impact framework, such as improved data infrastructure, would represent additional costs beyond the above estimate for a one-time set of analyses.

† The Minnesota Workforce Inventory is a comprehensive inventory of publicly-funded workforce and training resources. For more information, see <https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-we-do/agency-results/inventory/>

Examples of Similar Analyses in Other States

The cost estimate above is in line with similar studies in other states:

	Texas	Washington
Cost	\$125,000	\$320,000
Scope	Programs included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIA Title I programs serving adults, dislocated workers, and older youth • TANF education and training programs • FSET • Trade Adjustment Assistance • One state program serving ex-offenders <p><i>*18 of 28 Workforce Service Areas were included in the analysis.</i></p>	Programs included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIA Title I-B adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs • Community and technical college job training and worker retraining programs • Private career schools • Apprenticeship programs • Adult Basic Education • State Services for the Blind programs • Vocational Rehabilitation programs • Secondary school career and technical education programs
Notes	Costs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% for staff time • 15% for other costs 	Costs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$80,000 for in-house staff • \$227,000 for data evaluation • \$13,000 for data extraction and sharing

Net Impact Recommendations

Goal: Minnesota uses a standardized net impact evaluation framework to guide workforce strategy and aid in the continuous improvement of workforce education and training programs toward better outcomes for participants.

METHODOLOGY



RECOMMENDATION 1: Standardized Net Impact Evaluation Design

Evaluation design should follow the work of the GWDC pilot project and the technical specifications agreed to by the ROI Initiative Advisory Group.³² These specifications should be reviewed, updated, and built upon as necessary via the framework's oversight function (see recommendation seven).



RECOMMENDATION 2: Contextualized Net Impact Goals

Net impacts estimated for specific programs and providers should be interpreted in their appropriate context, taking into account the population served, local economic conditions, and other factors outside the control of the program itself. Accordingly, statistical techniques should be used to develop net impact targets that are adjusted to account for program-specific and provider-specific factors. These targets should be used to identify useful benchmarks, encourage appropriate comparisons, and understand programs and providers in context.



RECOMMENDATION 3: Leading Indicators

Statistical techniques should be used to develop leading indicators that are statistically predictive of longer-term net impacts. These leading indicators could include near-term participant outcomes (such as employment or the attainment of a certain wage) or programmatic progress points (such as completion of a training module or a score on a particular assessment).

DATA SHARING AND INFRASTRUCTURE



RECOMMENDATION 4: Statutory Support for Net Impact Data Sharing

The legislature should consider changes to state statute to permit the ongoing sharing of individual-level data between state agencies specifically for the purposes of the framework, barring other state or federal data privacy restrictions. These changes should be made in as narrow a fashion as possible, and with as many safeguards for individual data privacy as possible.



RECOMMENDATION 5: Better Consistency Across State Data Systems

State data systems should be improved through the creation of more consistent definitions and data collection practices across systems.³³ In particular, greater consistency and completeness would be useful with regard to:

- How entrance into and exit from programs is defined.
- How data on participant characteristics are defined.
- How various activities/services offered to participants are defined and tracked, including referred and vended services.
- How progress points and other potential leading indicators are defined and tracked.
- How costs are defined, categorized, and reported. In particular, greater clarity and alignment of cost categories to programmatic services and activities data (including administrative or fixed costs) is needed.
- Other costs associated with participant outcomes, including braided funds from other sources and costs associated with referred and vended services.



RECOMMENDATION 6: Development of a Data Warehouse

To fully utilize the net impact framework, the state should continue the development of longitudinal data systems including a data warehouse that integrates data across state agencies and programs to the greatest extent possible. The warehouse should also integrate financial data on program costs and make it easier for third-party service providers to provide data in a timely fashion.

Net Impact Recommendations, Continued

EVALUATION INTEGRITY AND REPORTING



RECOMMENDATION 7: Oversight Function

The GWDC should continue to act as an oversight board to ensure a highly credible, transparent, and standardized net impact framework. The GWDC should oversee the net impact framework, make recommendations on the use of data and results, and solicit guidance from advisory committees made up of additional stakeholders and representatives from the research and evaluation community.



RECOMMENDATION 8: Evaluation Integrity

To mitigate conflicts of interest, net impact and cost-benefit analyses should be either: (1) conducted by entity(ies) or organization(s) that do not make policy recommendations nor fund, administer, or operate workforce development programs or (2) include external audits of results, data, and methodologies.



RECOMMENDATION 9: Reporting

For the net impact framework to be useful, its results and insights should be readily accessible, intuitive to explore, straightforward to understand, and packaged with key audiences in mind. Results should be presented with a high level of context and guidance for proper interpretation and use. An online, interactive dashboard tool that meets high standards for usability should be developed to ensure transparency and accessibility.

Footnotes

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32. See http://www.gwdc.org/docs/roi/ROI_Model_Summary.doc for more detail on technical specifications.
33. Federal definitions may require specific data collection which may impact the state's data systems.

Inventory of Career Pathways and Experiential Learning Activities in Minnesota

In August 2014, the GWDC put out a survey to request for information on career pathways and experiential learning activities throughout Minnesota. The survey asked respondents to describe the goals and outcomes of their programs, innovative and/or impactful aspects of their work, and any plans (and/or barriers) for sustainability and scalability.

The GWDC received roughly one hundred responses, reproduced below. Respondents were asked to classify their programs as either “career pathways” or “experiential learning” but there was no requirement for programs to meet certain criteria with regard to program design or outcomes. Accordingly, what follows is an inclusive (though non-exhaustive) catalog of career pathway and experiential learning efforts in Minnesota.

If you would like your program/initiative added to this inventory, please contact GWDC staff (see www.gwdc.org/contact_us.html). An updated version of the inventory is available at www.gwdc.org/publications.html.

Inventory At-a-Glance

Career Pathways

3M – Charting the Future.....	25	Duluth FastTRAC Program	34
Advancing Career Pathways through Career and Technical Education.....	25	Facilities Maintenance Technician.....	34
Advanced Manufacturing Education Alliance	25	FastTRAC to Office Administration	35
Agricultural Education at Fergus Falls Public Schools.....	26	Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest	35
Agricultural Education at SouthWest Metro Educational Cooperative	26	Food and Microbiology Symposium	36
Agricultural Sciences Program at Pipestone Area Schools	26	Glencoe Silver Lake Agriculture/FFA	36
Agricultural/Animal Sciences Career Development Program.....	26	GNP Academy	36
Anoka County Career Connections for Low-Income Adults	27	Goodhue and Wabasha County Adult Career Pathway Training Initiative	37
Anoka County Career Connections for Older Workers.....	27	Grand Rapids High School AFNR Department	37
Aviation Mechanics Training Program	28	Hawley Agricultural Education Program	38
Bachelor of Science Pathways Program.....	29	HealthCare Pathway Program.....	38
Basic Manufacturing Education	29	HealthCare Pathways	38
Bloomington Public Schools Career Academy.....	29	Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Project (HECAP).....	39
Bridges to Healthcare (B2HC) FastTRAC.....	29	International Institute of Municipal Clerks Advanced Academy	39
Career and Educational Pathways (CEP).....	30	International Institute of Municipal Clerks Athenian Dialogue	39
Career Training Assistance	31	ISD 518 Agriculture Program	40
Careers in Manufacturing and Production (CMAP)	31	Medical Device Manufacturing and Assembly.....	40
Central Corridor College Fellowship	32	Minnesota Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource Programs (Secondary)	40
Commerical Driver’s License Training Program	33	Minnesota FastTRAC.....	41
Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO).....	33	Minnesota Municipal Clerks Institute	41
DCTC Customized Training – Transportation.....	34	Minnesota State University-Mankato/Customized Training.....	41
DCTC Railroad Conductor Program	34		

MnDOT Targeted Group Business Program within the Office of Civil Rights	41	Ready to Work Minnesota (<i>proposal pending</i>)	45
MnDOT Transitioning from MFIP to Work	42	Scrubs Camp	45
MnDOT Transportation Specialist Program	42	Short-Term HealthCare Programs Leading to Certification: Nursing Assistant and Technicians for EKG, Pharmacy and Phlebotomy	45
MnDOT's Commercial Driver's License Training Program	42	South Central Pathways to Health Care Careers	46
M-Powered	42	South Central Pathways to Manufacturing Careers	46
Northome School	43	Southwest Minnesota Career Pathways/FastTRAC	47
Perham High School Agriculture Department	43	Spring Leadership Institute	48
Pharmacy Technician	43	West Central Area Agricultural Education Program / West Central Area FFA	48
Phlebotomy	44	Workforce Investment Act Youth Program	48
Phoenix / SEEDs / Summer SEEDs and STEP-UP / St. Paul Right Track	44	Youth Apprenticeship	49

Experiential Learning

Academies of Alexandria	51	Machinist Apprenticeship	59
Agricultural Education Extended Contract Time	51	Maverick Software Consulting	59
Animal Science	51	Minneota Agriculture Department	60
Albert Lea Youth Apprenticeship Program	52	Minnesota Community Health Worker Certificate	60
Applied Learning Institute	52	Minnesota Youth Program	60
BestPrep	52	New London-Spicer High School Agriculture Program ..	61
Bridges Career Academies and Workplace Connection ...	53	Northeast Career EdVenture	61
Caledonia High School Career and Technical Education Agriculture/FFA	53	Nursing/Child Well-Being Experiential Learning Undergraduate Program	61
Central Minnesota Advanced Manufacturing On-the-Job Training	54	Owatonna High School Agriculture Education and FFA Program	61
Communication and Science Disorders Professional Experiential Learning Graduate Program	54	Paid Work Experience/Internship	62
Construction Laborers Education, Apprenticeship, and Training Program	54	Project Lead the Way	62
Custom Training Services at MState	55	Public Health Nursing Experiential Learning Undergraduate Program	62
Dassel-Cokato High School Agriculture Department	55	Registered Apprenticeship	63
Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It	56	Rochester Educators In the Workplace Institute	63
FUSION IT Residency Program for Application and Web Development	56	Small Business Development Center	63
Genesys Works	56	STEP-UP Summer Jobs Program	64
Hawthorne Education Center Partnership	57	Summer Agriculture	64
Health and Human Services Experiential Learning Initiative	57	Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Programs	64
Health Support Specialist Registered Apprenticeship Program	57	Survive and Thrive: A Conference for Medical Humanities	65
InternBemidji	58	Urban Scholars	65
Invest in You	58	Workforce 2020	65
Kandiyohi Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities	58	Youth Energy Summit (YES!)	66
		Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grants	66
		YouthBuild	67

CAREER PATHWAYS

3M – Charting the Future

KEY PARTNERS

3M Plants in Minnesota, Alexandria Technical and Community College (ATCC), other MnSCU institutions

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

High schools located near 3M plants, with plans for expansion

3M and ATCC started this initiative (unrelated to MnSCU's *Charting the Future* activities) in the summer of 2013. The Mechatronics faculty at ATCC work with 3M and selected high schools to provide trainers and simulations, curriculum, et cetera, to expose students to manufacturing careers, and train high school faculty to use the trainers and simulators in classes. 3M and ATCC are pursuing the involvement of additional MnSCU institutions, additional high schools, and potentially manufacturing plants in other states. The initiative is in the initial planning stages, with 3M providing funding to the ATCC Foundation.

Advancing Career Pathways through Career and Technical Education

KEY PARTNERS

Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC), other Rochester secondary/postsecondary entities, Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Mayo Clinic

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary and postsecondary adult basic education students, workforce development clients

AREA SERVED

Southeast Minnesota

The career pathway in Health Sciences spans secondary and postsecondary education, ABE, WDI, and the Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Mayo Clinic. Secondary and ABE students receive college credits at RCTC as they complete the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) pathway which gives them an incentive to continue their education in nursing moving or completing a Hospital CNA, LPN, RN, Master, or PhD in nursing. Ninety-three percent of students in this pathway pass their test and are or can be employed in the southeast Minnesota – students that have often been unsuccessful in previous educational experiences. ABE students have navigators, secondary students have a CNA teacher, and postsecondary students have advisors to help them all stay

on track. The approach is innovative and impactful because the Mayo Clinic has become a strong partner, investing \$6.5 million over the past ten years, to grow their employees locally. They provide an 800-hour apprenticeship in Clinical Pathology each year to a secondary student. Mayo also sits on the pathway advisory board to continue to provide input on the health science industry. WDI provides navigators and leadership to the pathway and also sits on the advisory committee along with the Chamber of Commerce. All partners meet regularly to adjust curriculum and course offerings. This is an established pathway and is being scaled for use in our Welding program. One of the most important assets in creating a pathway is industry involvement. Our Chamber of Commerce is extremely helpful in making connections with business as this is a true pathway partnership.

Advanced Manufacturing Education Alliance

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud Technical and Community College (SCTCC), Pine Technical and Community College (PTCC), Central Lakes College (CLC), 360° Manufacturing and Applied Engineering Center of Excellence

TARGET POPULATION

Unemployed individuals, manufacturing employees, veterans

AREA SERVED

Statewide

The Advanced Manufacturing Education (AME) Alliance provides educational programs that prepare trade-affected workers, unemployed individuals, veterans, incumbent workers, and other adults to work in advanced manufacturing fields including automation and robotics, plastics technology/manufacturing, rapid prototyping, machining, and welding. The AME Alliance is made up of Central Lakes College, Pine Community and Technical College, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, and the 360° Manufacturing Center of Excellence along with partner employers, workforce and government agencies, and community organizations. To support student success, AME Alliance programs provide “wrap around” student services and integrate Adult Basic Education (ABE) into introductory manufacturing courses. In addition, the AME Alliance utilizes a variety of course delivery methods, including face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses. Select courses are also enhanced with specialized computer simulations and games developed using cognitive task analysis methodologies. The AME Alliance provides a stackable credential model that includes multiple entry and exit points for those individuals wishing to expand their advanced manufacturing skills.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Agricultural Education at Fergus Falls Public Schools

KEY PARTNERS

Fergus Falls Public Schools, industry and postsecondary leaders

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

Fergus Falls area

Agricultural Education at Fergus Falls Public Schools exposes high school students to various career pathways in agriculture. The goals are to provide a variety of hands-on experiences in many vocational careers. Around 32 introductory and advanced classes are offered. The curriculum is kept up-to-date through a close connection to industry and postsecondary leaders in the area who serve on an Advisory Council.

Agricultural Education at SouthWest Metro Educational Cooperative

KEY PARTNERS

SouthWest Metro Educational Cooperative, agriculture community, Minnesota School of Business (MSB)

TARGET POPULATION

High school students (grades 10-12)

AREA SERVED

Southwest metro (Waconia, Chaska, Chanhassen, Shakopee, Prior Lake, Savage, Jordan, New Prague)

This program prepares students for personal leadership and growth, along with career success. It provides an avenue for students to investigate science and math through a unique perspective. Students are given an opportunity to explore the careers available in the industry of agriculture. Supervised experience is also used to give students a hands-on learning experience, linked to the classroom materials. The FFA chapter is integral to the program. Continued support from the stakeholders and the community will be essential for our program.

Agricultural Sciences Program at Pipestone Area Schools

KEY PARTNERS

Pipestone Area Schools, including instructors, administrators, parents, agriculture community, students

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

Pipestone Area School District

The goals of the program are to expose our students to a wide variety of introductory and advanced agricultural science classes to help them find a career pathway that is of interest and will be a success for them in the future, and to allow students an opportunity to not only achieve in the classroom but in a lab, work-based and intracurricular setting.

Agricultural/Animal Sciences Career Development Program

KEY PARTNERS

Independent School District 196, Minnesota Zoo, Spark-Y, Habitattitude (with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others), University of Minnesota, local businesses

TARGET POPULATION

High school students (grades 11-12)

AREA SERVED

Independent School District 196 and eligible out-of-district students

The goal of the program is to give students awareness and experience in the animal sciences, incorporating issues and sustainability practices. The program is innovative in that it tries to incorporate sustainability into otherwise standard animal science courses. This includes a school vermicomposting and an aquaponics system. These systems are used as examples and students are challenged to use sustainability in other areas of their lives and with other projects. A grant has helped with the aquaponics and vermicomposting systems on initial cost. The program is also unique in being able to use the Minnesota Zoo as a resource for our instruction, both in visiting the exhibits as well as accessing tours and talks with professionals. Partnerships have and will continue to be key for the sustainability of the program and the ability to serve students.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Anoka County Career Connections for Low-Income Adults

KEY PARTNERS

Anoka County, Anoka Technical College (ATC), Anoka Ramsey Community College (ARCC), Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE), Anoka County Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

TARGET POPULATION

Low-income adults and TANF recipients

AREA SERVED

Anoka County

Anoka County Career Connections includes four defined pathways: CNA training, Practical Nursing FastTRAC, Precision Sheet Metal, and Office and Administrative Technologies. Each pathway was developed in response to local business needs and the goal is to help low skilled adults improve their foundational skills and earn a credential, and to provide employers with skilled workers. Each pathway includes an ABE component to assure learners can be successful once they transition to technical training. It also imbeds navigator services, comprehensive assessment, support services, and coaching on mastering the habits of being a successful student. We have developed an entry point called the Career Connections workshop which serves as a single point of entry for adults to learn about career pathway options, complete assessments, NCRC testing, employer tours, and career exploration. Upon completion of the 40-hour workshop each person will have a career pathway road map. The partners have been engaged in building career pathways for several years. By braiding multiple funding streams and securing competitive funding partners have been able to add two new pathways: office and administrative technology and FastTRAC practical nursing. In order to sustain current efforts, funding resources must be continuously identified and secured. This can be a challenge as these funds are typically competitive in nature but the partnership is dedicated to sustaining this effort as it has proven to be effective in meeting industry needs for skilled workers. (See page 6 for a spotlight on one participant's story.)

Anoka County Career Connections for Older Workers

KEY PARTNERS

Anoka County, Anoka-Ramsey Community College (ARCC), Anoka Technical College (ATC), Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE)

TARGET POPULATION

Individuals over 50 and public assistant recipients that are work-ready

AREA SERVED

Anoka County residents have priority

Anoka County's Career Connections is designed to provide adults an opportunity to gain valuable skills and competencies that align with job opportunities in the region. It advances Anoka County's current pathway model by leveraging existing resources and proven strategies. Over the two-year Adult Workforce Development Grant funding cycle, 150 adults will be served with at least 70 percent of the enrolled individuals being older workers or returning to work from public assistance. The initial activity will include an orientation to career pathways along with an assessment of each participant's math and reading skills. These results will guide the participant and counselor to their next step, which is either the Career Connections Workshop or Jump Start Your Success. Adults without a high school diploma or GED will be referred to Jump Start, a cohort class with 180 hours of compressed customized instruction taught by Metro North ABE. Once a participant completes their GED they will transition to the Career Connections Workshop. Career Connections is a 48-hour comprehensive assessment activity which will include a range of career assessment inventories, career exploration, developing effective time management and communication skills, the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), employer tours, financial aid information, and tips on mastering the habits of being a successful student. Upon completion of Career Connections each participant will develop their career pathway road map. This road map may include direct pathways into three distinct areas: healthcare, manufacturing, or business services. The partners recognize that not all participants may select from these three pathways, so the counselor will work with them to identify other existing in-demand training options. Additional funds will allow the partners to build a new pathway in business services and to add capacity within the healthcare and manufacturing pathways. Braiding existing FastTRAC and Minnesota Job Skills Partnership grant funding and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds assures that these investments are well-coordinated and lead to positive outcomes. The most impactful part of this grant is it provides the resources for the essential components of a career pathway model including outreach and recruitment, the navigator role

(case management and counseling support), support services, tuition assistance, internships for the business services pathway, job search, and job placement assistance. It is important to have a great assessment and understanding of the career pathway prior to starting training. Career connection workshop provides this and the Jumpstart program allows customers to obtain their GED and financial aid to continue their education. Anoka County is looking at how to incorporate this workshop into Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) training to be more sustainable. Leveraging funding from several sources allows creativity and flexibility to continue this model.

Aviation Mechanics Training Program

KEY PARTNERS

Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC),
Delta Airlines, Endeavor Air

TARGET POPULATION

Incumbent workers

AREA SERVED

Eleven-county metro area

This program seeks to provide a rapid response to the workforce needs of Pinnacle (now Endeavor Airlines) and its parent, Delta, when Endeavor moved its headquarters to Minnesota in 2013, in part based on economic development incentives through DEED. The program provides an innovative response to Delta's workforce needs (over 50 percent of mechanics are over age 55) by leveraging MCTC's agility in receiving a non-traditional \$375,000 Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) grant to move the contents of its program on-site at Delta Airlines, rent free (the college moved out of Flying Cloud in June 2014 and would have had no place to run the program). The program represents a major commitment by MCTC Continuing Education and Customized Training (CECT) to provide research and development and academic program function. The program was instituted by (a) applying to take the program out of suspension through MnSCU, (b) submitting 60/120 credit waiver application through MnSCU, (c) taking the program through the MCTC Academic and Standards Council three times, (d) submitting an application to the Higher Learning Commission and preparation for a site visit as a result of the change of location of the entire academic program, (e) reapplying for and substantial communication with the FAA, which also requires a site inspection prior to beginning a program, (f) working through a myriad of issues with the Business Office, Financial Aid, Registrar, the Minnesota State College Faculty, and others to start a program with a credentialed faculty member on an alternative spring semester academic calendar, and (g) working through a myriad of complications regarding EPA permitting for airborne

contaminants, ground water, et cetera, as well as a myriad of construction issues including asbestos, having to cut a wall out to move aircraft inside, et cetera.

Why is this program significant? Delta is growing and is here to stay in Minnesota. Minneapolis-St. Paul is the number two hub in the world for Delta. Per the MnSCU Aviation Sector Study, aviation is a growth sector in Minnesota. Minnesota has a major employer in Delta with 12,000 employees in our state, and two aviation companies' headquarters—Sun Country and Endeavor Air. Without this workforce effort, an Assistant Service Mechanic (ASM) at Delta Airlines would be unable to become an FAA-licensed aviation mechanic without uprooting and moving a minimum of 300 miles. Through this training, base wages can be doubled from \$40,000 to over \$80,000 within 6 years. With overtime and profit sharing, wages can exceed \$100,000. Minnesota used to have three aviation mechanics programs. One is needed in the Twin Cities, which houses a major hub for a worldwide airline company. In addition, as a result of this work MCTC is partnering with Northland Community and Technical College through a Center of Excellence grant to share resources and curriculum, with a goal of aligning curriculum and coursework through technology.

What are some of the program's measurable outcomes in relation to the mission of MnSCU in workforce training and economic development? Partners are working together under new models to be the preferred provider of comprehensive workplace solutions through programs and services that build employee skills and solve real-world problems for communities and businesses across the state. The program is a new model, built by resurrecting a suspended credit-based program and moving aircraft and six-figures worth of equipment on site at Delta. The program addresses real world problems by providing a rapid response to a new Minnesota employer headquarters, and a major aviation employer, facing the silver Tsunami. It is a comprehensive workforce solution because it provides assistant mechanics, who work side-by-side with FAA-licensed mechanics, a pathway to doubled wages that otherwise would have been unachievable while working for Delta. It is a workforce solution that responds to demand, fulfilling a workforce need for highly-skilled, highly paid careers and addressing documented major employer demand per the MnSCU Aviation Sector study. Lastly, the partnership with Northland Community and Technical College through a Center of Excellence grant will help to align curriculum and share coursework through telepresence.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Bachelor of Science Pathways Program

KEY PARTNERS

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota (SMU), local MnSCU community colleges

TARGET POPULATION

Adult and non-traditional learners

AREA SERVED

Twin Cities and the greater metro area

The Pathways Program at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota responds to the growing population of incoming college students attending two-year colleges who plan to transfer their credits towards a bachelor's degree. Students complete their first two years at a community/technical college and their final two years at Saint Mary's University through an evening, accelerated model. Pathways students can transfer any associate degree and/or the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC). There are many goals of this program. It is designed to help adult learners and non-traditional students utilize community college tuition price points, older college credit, and credit for prior learning. This program helps students persist towards graduation and earn a bachelor's degree in a time-efficient and cost-effective way. The innovation of this program has led to Saint Mary's courses being offered on and near community college campuses, advising in partnership, and new Saint Mary's degree specializations created to build off of community college associate degrees. This unique partnership benefits students by making education affordable, accessible, and attainable.

Basic Manufacturing Education

KEY PARTNERS

Minneapolis Urban League, AccessAbility, Inc. (AAI)

TARGET POPULATION

At-risk youth, transitioning back to public life

AREA SERVED

Greater Twin Cities

AAI's relationship with Minneapolis Urban League will be focused on the Precision Sheet Metal Academy training, but is still not completely defined (AAI just received a \$2 million grant). Along with Hennepin Technical College and Minneapolis Public Schools, we will be providing core courses to help participants work towards employment in construction and manufacturing.

Bloomington Public Schools Career Academy

KEY PARTNERS

Minneapolis Building And Construction Trades Council, Dakota County Technical College (DCTC), Normandale Community College (NCC)

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

South West Metro

The Bloomington Public Schools Career Academy is a unique Bloomington Public Schools program to support Career Pathways for all students and their transition into the workforce and post-secondary education in alignment with World's Best Workforce Legislation. At Bloomington Public Schools Career Academy, students will have the ability to earn dual credit in contextualized courses and the opportunity to complete their high school diploma while earning college credits from partner MnSCU community and technical colleges. Students will set goals for their career pathway and under the guidance of a team of instructors, business and community experts, and Career Navigators, students will receive the support to complete their plan. Bloomington Public schools Career Academy will have multiple pathways for students to complete their career plan and transition onto a college campus or directly into the workforce.

The Bloomington Public Schools Career Academy will open in the fall of 2015 and is currently developing Career Pathways in Healthcare, IT, Trades and Manufacturing.

Bridges to Healthcare (B2HC) FastTRAC

KEY PARTNERS

Rochester Community & Technical College (RCTC), Southeastern Minnesota Workforce Investment Board (SE MN WIB), Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI), Hawthorne Education Center (ABE), United Way of Olmsted County, Mayo Clinic and other employers

TARGET POPULATION

Low-income, dislocated, underemployed, educationally underdeveloped and ESL adults

AREA SERVED

Southeast Minnesota

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

The Bridges to Healthcare program is a FastTRAC-modeled program supported by very engaged partners, including a strong voice and support from private industry. This program started with TAACCCT grant funding gained three years ago by a three-state initiative involving southeast Minnesota, northeast Iowa and western Wisconsin known as the AIM2WIN consortium. The model includes a pre-vocational healthcare academy at Hawthorne ABE, integrated developmental education courses at RCTC, and navigator case management provided by Workforce Development, Inc. The uniqueness of this approach is certainly related to the extensive braided funding mechanism, which includes a federal TAACCCT grant, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult funds, MnSCU dedicated funding, K-12 ABE dedicated funding, state FastTRAC funding, United Way funding, and (perhaps most importantly) a serious injection of funds by the Mayo Clinic. Mayo is impressed enough with the model that they assist with industry overviews, interview preparation, actual interviews for graduates, and significant hiring. Mayo leadership is so impressed with the model that they want to see it expanded to other cities/sites throughout southern Minnesota.

The goals for the program vary based on the academic pathway but include the following overall:

- Increased transition rates from Hawthorne to RCTC
- Increased retention rates at RCTC
- Increased completion rates at RCTC
- Placement and retention in livable wage positions

B2HC/FastTRAC Statistics:

- Total served at RCTC as of Spring Semester 2014: 155
- Total number still enrolled as of Spring Semester 2014: 52
- Total number of students dropped: 30
- Total number of completers: 73
- Total number of students retained for two semesters or longer: 115

FastTRAC Medical since October 2013:

- 40 percent between ages of 25-39
- 48 percent non-white
- 12 percent Hispanic or Latino
- 11 percent report having some sort of disability
- 36 percent unemployed for longer than 15 weeks
- 23 percent have no significant work history
- 53 percent TANF/GA/Welfare recipients or economically disadvantaged
- 36 percent parents in a one-parent family

Through employer commitment, the partnership has had some success with sustainability, but the largest barrier is in the way the partners are funded and the need for a sustainable funding source to allow successful models to continue.

Career and Educational Pathways (CEP)

KEY PARTNERS

AcessAbility, Inc. (AAI), local MnSCU institutions, Minneapolis Public Schools Adult Basic Education (ABE), MN Department of Employment and Economic Development, MN Department of Corrections, MN Department of Labor and Industry, employers, various nonprofit providers

TARGET POPULATION

Minorities transitioning from jail to community

AREA SERVED

Minneapolis and St. Paul

Direct Goals/Outcomes to be Measured:

- Reduced Recidivism
- Educational Gains
- Income Gains
- Average Placement Wage of \$12+ per hour
- Industry-recognized certifications, credentialing and college credits
- High percentage of service to minorities

Indirect Outcomes for the Community:

- Increased Public Safety
- Reduction of Racial Disparity
- Lowered Arrest and Incarceration Costs
- Increased Taxpayer Revenue
- Increased Family Stability
- Better Futures and Development for Early Childhood and Youth

Targeted Industries Based on Labor Market Information:

- Advanced Manufacturing
 - » Precision Sheet Metal Workers (Brake Press Operators, Laser Cutters, Etc.)
 - » Tool Makers
 - » Machinists
 - » Welders
- Construction
 - » Commercial (carpenters, laborers, plumbers, etc.)
 - » Highway Heavy (demolition, equipment operators, etc.)

How does it work? Nonprofit partners and correctional facility staff refer potential candidates, who fill out an application package including essay questions that are used to qualify them for CEP participation—candidates must be ready, willing and able. Participants are assigned a pathway navigator for individual career pathway development, case management and follow up. Support service coordinators and our educational navigator will support the individual case plans through the planning and scheduling of necessary wrap around services and

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

educational components. Participants go through a two-day orientation where they receive educational assessment and training on topics including safety, financial basics, employer expectations and team building. Participants start work in *Phase 1* (at an AccessAbility Business Services facility), *Phase 2* (work experience/contract labor at employer partner facility) or *Phase 3* (full-time hire). Incremental income gains occur at each phase with the goal for *Phase 3* to exceed \$12 an hour. Participants attend classes for educational gains according to their educational capacity and current reading and math assessments; ideal candidates for immediate post-secondary immersion have an 8th grade math level. Upon program exit, follow-up case management occurs for two years to ensure continued career and educational pathway progression and job retention. Some of the biggest challenges the program faces include:

- Changing ingrained attitudes and social behaviors for successful reintegration into community—thinking for a change
- Transportation (both costs of and logistics)
- Criminogenic needs determination (involves static and dynamic factors and resulting risk levels for reoffending)
- Evidence-based need for relatively higher-touch frequency case management and a lower ratio of participants to pathway navigators
- Developing new employer partners and additional funding streams for working capital requirements, reasonable and customary expenses, and administrative functions
- Working within the traditional educational systems for basic and post-secondary education to initiate JIT and customized training
- Working within DOC rules and requirements for work release and transitional housing
- Gaining access to financial resources to address outstanding tuition debts and/or find additional aid for educational fees since a majority of participants have existing barriers to postsecondary education access based on previous circumstances
- Data collection (input) and extraction (output) necessary to navigate a growing number of individual case plans and manage information in order to comply with a growing number of reporting requirements/formats

Career Training Assistance

KEY PARTNERS

Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP), Jewish Family and Children's Services

TARGET POPULATION

Low-income Adults in Minneapolis

AREA SERVED

Minneapolis

Career Training Assistance (CTA) is designed to help unemployed or underemployed Minneapolis adults access training funds to complete certified and industry-recognized credentials, then obtain employment. The program targets training in health care careers. CTA provides tuition assistance for individuals, many already in entry-level health care careers, and most are funded to complete two-year nursing degrees. The two-year nursing degree is a true gateway career to higher-paying, more stable careers in health care. In 2013, the average wage at placement was just above \$21.00 per hour. Further, the program is 100 percent students of color. Much of the program's success is driven by the students who enter the program. Since many are already in health care careers, the participants' knowledge and desire to stay in the field results in high completion rates and high employment rates post-training.

Careers in Manufacturing and Production (CMAP)

KEY PARTNERS

Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association (CMMA), District 742 Adult Basic Education (ABE), St. Cloud Technical and Community College (SCTCC) and Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC)

TARGET POPULATION

Long-term unemployed individuals, veterans

AREA SERVED

Central Minnesota

This program prepares and places individuals in manufacturing employment. SBETC is the grant recipient and administrator. Training occurs post-hire.

CMAP serves 43 people over two years. Recruitment is provided by the key partners and other community organizations providing services to the target population. SBETC determines eligibility, assessment, counseling, and support.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Services are coordinated with those provided by the referral organization.

Because the target population is lacking income, the project requires participation in a pre-training hiring event with participating manufacturing employers organized by SBETC. Participants receive job search preparation and apply and interview. The goal of the activity is that the participants secure part- or full-time employment in the field for which they will be studying and with employers who offer tuition support to continue training post-program.

Participants then begin training provided by the SCTCC using four courses (8 credits) constructed around the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) Certified Production Technologies (CPT) Credential. The four courses included are: 1) Safety Awareness; 2) Maintenance Awareness; 3) Manufacturing Processes; 4) Quality. Participants are also provided opportunity to access ABE services during these courses to assure competency that could be hindered by language or other learning factors. Participants who complete each course are eligible to test for the MSSC certification in that specific area. Those who pass all four test areas earn the CPT credential from MSSC. The universal nature of the MSSC skills provides a foundational understanding of the manufacturing sector.

Participants may then continue to a 16-credit Production Tech Certificate that then routes to all manufacturing diplomas and degrees at the SCTCC. CMAP may include an On-the-Job Training component if funds are available.

The scalability of this model is great and partners continue to identify areas where these courses and skills are applicable with industry partners, looking for ways to extend this training in other grants and related programs. The greatest challenges to date are securing commitment to the program by long-term unemployed participants and by employers who immediately need fully engaged/proficient employees to meet customer demand.

Central Corridor College Fellowship

KEY PARTNERS

Minneapolis Community & Technical College, Saint Paul College, Central Corridor Funders Collaborative, Central Corridor Anchor Partnership, the McKnight Foundation, various healthcare employers

TARGET POPULATION

Postsecondary health care students

AREA SERVED

Minneapolis and Saint Paul

The Central Corridor College Fellowship (C3F) was established to connect college health care students at Saint Paul College and Minneapolis Community & Technical College, who live in the city of Minneapolis or Saint Paul, with employers who operate within a mile of the Green Line. C3F assists these students in finding entry-level employment at participating health care providers. The goal is for Fellows to gain an inroad at local health care providers and build meaningful work experience prior to graduation from their program. C3F will also connect Fellows with mentors via networking events and online discussion.

The curriculum offered at Saint Paul College and Minneapolis Community & Technical College is developed with feedback from healthcare employers to ensure that students are studying material that is relevant to the workplace. Many of our instructors have been employed in healthcare fields, which give them insights into what they teach and the ability to provide practical applications of coursework for students.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Commerical Driver's License Training Program

KEY PARTNERS

Local Unions, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), MN Department of Labor (DLI), City of St. Paul, Dakota County Technical College (DCTC), YWCA of St. Paul

TARGET POPULATION

Section 3 residents, women, minorities, unemployed or underemployed individuals

AREA SERVED

Seven-county metro area

This program is designed to help women, minorities and the long-term unemployed achieve gainful employment in transportation and highway heavy occupations. The MnDOT segment of our program seeks 75 percent placement in highway heavy and related fields. Eighty-six percent of our candidates have been placed; however, due to newness of the program and delays with the construction season, only 30 percent are currently specific to highway heavy construction (the program is in the first year of a three-year contract, and DEED and City of St. Paul contracts are just getting under way). Impact and Innovation are rooted in a begin with the end in mind philosophy and holistic approach in addressing the needs of underserved populations. The program uses other internal departments to address housing, transportation, employment, work readiness issues, et cetera (even certified fitness trainers are available that can reconcile certain health concerns to broaden a client's job availability). The only real barrier to sustainability is a significant downturn in the economy. Transportation and construction are extremely sensitive to economic shifts. Likewise, these industries are generally the easiest for ex-offenders or moderately-skilled workers to penetrate. An emphasis on life skills, financial literacy and continued training allow us substantial sustainability and opportunities to scale as unions and private transportation firms (e.g. Cement Masons, Teamsters, Bricklayers and other Transportation Companies). source the YWCA as a preferred partner and skills developer.)

Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO)

KEY PARTNERS

Battle Lake, Henning and Perham school districts; Lakes Country Service Cooperative, West Central Initiative

TARGET POPULATION

High school students (grades 11-12)

AREA SERVED

Battle Lake, Henning and Perham school districts

The Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) program enables high school students in rural Minnesota to become self-reliant, enterprising individuals who will start successful businesses and contribute to the ongoing development of their communities. The goals of the program are to: •Provide opportunities for students to be engaged, curious and ready to learn. Provide real-world, real-life experiences for students. Create a learning environment that takes the lid off of learning. Connect students with business professionals. Transform the way young people view the world and their future. Inspire and encourage young people to return to their communities to live, work, raise families and start businesses. The CEO program is funded by business investors and provides a mentor from the business community for each CEO student. The program is open to high school juniors and seniors and selects students through a rigorous application process, and provides two high school credits. Participants meet for 90 minutes each day, utilizing area businesses as classrooms and visiting dozens of area businesses each year. The program also hosts 50-60 guest speakers each year. The program emphasizes 21st century learning skills and provides for the opportunity for each student to start a business. Each year, the program hosts an annual trade show to showcase student businesses. The Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship provides the training manual and on-going support for the program.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

DCTC Customized Training – Transportation

KEY PARTNERS

Dakota Community and Technical College (DCTC) Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Teamsters

TARGET POPULATION

Blue collar workers

AREA SERVED

Metro area

This short-term training (Class A and B Commercial Drivers License) provides an opportunity for participants to obtain a meaningful job at a better-than-average salary sufficient to support a family. The program is available to individuals and employer-sponsored participants. Barriers include lower rates of success in completing the program and passing the drivers test among diverse participants. The program needs upgrades in the training yard (resurfacing the parking lot).

DCTC Railroad Conductor Program

KEY PARTNERS

Union Pacific, Canadian Pacific, BNSF Railway, Dakota Community and Technical College (DCTC)

TARGET POPULATION

Individuals 18 and older

AREA SERVED

Midwestern states

Railroad companies are hiring throughout the country. This seven-week program provides railroad skills. Railroad companies support the program to ease the steep learning curve of technical training. To encourage sustainability the program will continue to be marketed job seekers. The scalability of the program depends on number of instructors and their availability.

Duluth FastTRAC Program

KEY PARTNERS

Lake Superior College, Adult Basic Education (ABE), SOAR Career Solutions, Duluth WorkForce Center, Duluth Workforce Development

TARGET POPULATION

Low-income residents of Duluth

AREA SERVED

Duluth

The Duluth FastTRAC Program has received four rounds of funding, all with the goal of training participants for careers in healthcare and manufacturing. Two rounds trained 20 participants as Certified Nursing Assistants, one round of 15 participants were trained as Phlebotomists, and one round of 15 participants were trained as machinists. The programs are impactful because their participants would not have qualified to take these classes as a traditional student because their math and reading scores were too low. The innovation in the program was partnering with ABE to provide another instructor in the classroom who was able to support student learning by providing remedial instruction alongside the faculty member who was providing the technical training. Lake Superior College (LSC) is looking for additional funding to help pay for the additional ABE instructor in the classroom for this type of program. However, a more difficult task is to find additional funding for the wrap-around services that agencies like SOAR Career Services provide the students. LSC is working with several community partners to find funding this type of support.

Facilities Maintenance Technician

KEY PARTNERS

Anoka Technical College (ATC), WorkForce Center, county employers, HVAC employers

TARGET POPULATION

Older adults, unemployed and underemployed individuals, women, minorities

AREA SERVED

North metro; Anoka, Ramsey, and Hennepin Counties

The goals and outcomes of this program are licenses, certificates of completion, and employment. What makes this approach innovative is that it involves a shorter time period to complete, it provides credit for prior learning, and partners with local business seeking students enrolled or graduated from this program. Sustainability requires more partnership, a retooling of skills needed by industry as they change, and

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

better recruitment of students specifically minority and women students.

FastTRAC to Office Administration

KEY PARTNERS

Washington County, South Washington County Adult Basic Education (ABE), Century College

TARGET POPULATION

Individuals seeking a high school diploma/GED, individuals lacking college experience or credentials

AREA SERVED

Statewide; priority for Washington County residents

This project offers individuals the opportunity to receive training in the growing field of Office Administration. Students will be provided the foundational education in basic reading, writing, keyboarding and computer skills then continue on to the integrated courses of Introduction to Software Applications and Microsoft Word at Century College. Students receive educational support from ABE in the classroom and support services from WorkForce Center Navigator. Students will have the opportunity to complete the Microsoft Word IT Certificate upon successful class completion. Once the courses are finished, students have the option to choose from three different pathways: continuation in education at a MnSCU institution, entrance into an internship program or assistance with placement into employment.

Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest

KEY PARTNERS

Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota Job Corps, Merrick Community Services, Summit Academy OIC, Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest (FTI-UM)

TARGET POPULATION

Individuals seeking employment in the finishing trades industry throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and western Wisconsin

AREA SERVED

Minnesota, Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, Montana

Nationally recognized as a leader in finishing trades education, FTI-UM offers the opportunity for individuals to enhance their skill sets, initiate and complete an apprenticeship, or achieve a journey worker continuing education and certification through a complete educational program designed to fit

their schedule and needs. FTI-UM programs allow participants to Earn While You Learn, and build a strong future in the finishing trades industry. Instruction is available in the following distinct areas:

- OSHA Safety Training – OSHA-10 and OSHA-30
- American Red Cross 1st Aid/CPR/AED Certification and Refresher Training
- Skills Training
- Continuing Education
- On-the-job Training
- Product Training
- General Career Training
- AWS Welding Refresher and Certification Training

FTI-UM is committed to helping individuals become highly-trained workers who will be able to command higher pay and better benefits, and be increasingly in demand in the finishing trades industry. FTI-UM strives to create the most skilled, safety-conscious workers in today's increasingly competitive marketplace. FTI-UM has built a strong partnership with the following organizations, providing quality training to their members:

- District Council 82
- Minnesota Drywall and Plasterers Association
- Minnesota Painting and Wallcovering Employees Association
- Twin Cities Glass Association

Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest is an educational institute dedicated to developing professional tradespeople, advancing their skills and certifying their qualifications in the Upper Midwest. Our learners include commercial and industrial painters, drywall finishers, glaziers, and glassworker. The FTI-UM exists to serve a number of purposes:

- To supply all signatory contractors with highly-skilled workers including apprentices, journeypersons, supervisors, project managers, et cetera.
- To facilitate a unique learning environment with varying instructional objectives and technologies.
- To provide activities and resources that fosters a positive, comprehensive training environment.
- To provide career advancement through a combination of classroom instruction as well as shop and field experiences.
- To provide continuing education and training in the form of Journeyperson Continuing Education classes.

Apprentice development and progression is achieved by partaking in classes such as Health and Safety, Blueprint Reading, Mathematics, and Leadership and Foreperson Training to name a few. With a state of the art training center, FTI-UM specializes in complete training for Coatings Applicator

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Specialists, Commercial Painter and Wall Coverers, Drywall Finishers, Glaziers, and Glassworkers. Men and women are afforded comprehensive curriculum and unequalled training. FTI-UM impresses upon its students the realization that acquiring vital trade-specific skills is necessary in securing and maintaining fair wages, health and pension benefits, and favorable working conditions. The FTI-UM vision is unparalleled. Our comprehensive training programs are a collaborative effort designed to supply our union contractors and associations the most uniquely qualified workforce, now and into the future.

Food and Microbiology Symposium

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University, local and global leaders in the food safety industry

TARGET POPULATION

Food safety industry

AREA SERVED

Statewide and beyond

This event is designed to showcase the ever-changing food safety industry. The workshop is focused on advancements in food microbiology testing, research, and innovation. Participants learn from the industry's most respected experts on pathogen testing, regulation, technology, and quality control.

Glencoe Silver Lake Agriculture/FFA

KEY PARTNERS

Glencoe-Silver Lake Agriculture Promoters, Glencoe-Silver Lake Public Schools (administration and school board)

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (grades 7-12)

AREA SERVED

McLeod County

Students in grades 7-12 have the opportunity to take part in an ever-expanding list of agriculturally-related classes including: Agricultural Mechanics, Welding, Small Gas Engines, Animal Science, College Animal Science, Minnesota Wildlife, Food Chemistry, Agriculture Business/Economics, Agriculture Literacy, Project Lead the Way Robotics and Agriculture Leadership. Plans to expand the program to offer international opportunities, a greenhouse, and crop and soil science classes are under development. The FFA program offers students the opportunity to grow their classroom knowledge and practice in a competitive setting through Career Development Events,

develop entrepreneurial and job skills through Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs), participate in a Farm-to-Cafeteria program, and develop camaraderie with other agricultural leaders. The goal of the Glencoe-Silver Lake (GSL) program is to aid students in preparing for global careers in agriculture, technology, and science. The goals of all three program areas align with GSL's mission statement (*"Creating an environment where education is valued, excellence is expected, and lifelong learning thrives."*) and vision (*"To Connect. To Lead. To Inspire."*) The approach is student-driven and project-based. Students learn by doing, and are the main drivers behind any initiatives we pursue. Student leadership and enthusiasm are the major determinants of the program's success. Current barriers to sustainability and scalability include securing funding for program initiatives such as a greenhouse or international programs. Activity fees for students often pose problems in participation. A final challenge comes in the form of summer contract time. Lead staff person currently only has 10 days and puts in close to 40. Community support, the GSL Agriculture Promoters, and student involvement will continue to be strongholds for the program's sustainability.

GNP Academy

KEY PARTNERS

GNP Company (GNPCo/Gold'n Plump), St. Cloud Technical and Community College (SCTCC), District 742 Adult Basic Education (ABE), Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC)

TARGET POPULATION

Incumbent workers at GNPCo

AREA SERVED

Central Minnesota

This program advances the skills of incumbent workers in manufacturing and prepares them to continue postsecondary credit-based training and advancement. SBETC is the grant recipient and administrator.

The GNP Academy is a FastTRAC initiative building on past FastTRAC and other programming with the same partners. The Academy trains 12 incumbent workers on-site at the GNPCo processing plant in Cold Spring. The training is credit-based and provided by the SCTCC and ABE in a computer lab equipped by the employer.

The training provided uses four courses (8 credits) constructed around the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) Certified Production Technologies (CPT) Credential. The four courses included are: 1) Safety Awareness; 2) Maintenance Awareness; 3) Manufacturing Processes; 4) Quality. Participants who complete each course are eligible to test

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

for the MSSC certification in that specific area. Those who pass all four test areas earn the CPT credential from MSSC. Participants may then continue to a 16-credit Production Tech Certificate that then routes to all manufacturing diplomas and degrees at SCTCC.

Grant funding offsets ABE costs and SCTCC tuition for the first year. ABE formula funds may accrue for year two expenses and tuition reimbursement by GNPCo will pay for credits in year two if the employee achieves the required academic performance. GNPCo has its own internal career pathway, supported by on-site Intermediate and Advanced English-as-a-Second Language and now credit-based postsecondary training.

GNPCo is willing to make their training site available to the community.

Goodhue and Wabasha County Adult Career Pathway Training Initiative

KEY PARTNERS

Hiawatha Valley Adult Basic Education (ABE), Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical, Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI), Hispanic Outreach of Goodhue County

TARGET POPULATION

Adults returning to work after receiving public assistance, Hispanic/Latino adults

AREA SERVED

Goodhue and Wabasha Counties

The goal of this project is to provide career pathway training opportunities for adults who traditionally face barriers to successful employment. This project is an industry-specific initiative to provide skills development and education that leads to industry-recognized credentials. This project targets the critical need for a skilled workforce within the region. Using recently-validated labor market information, this project addresses several opportunities to further develop and provide training opportunities to meet the workforce and education needs of industry in our region. The specific goals and outcomes of the project are to:

- Assist individuals in gaining skills and competencies that are necessary to obtain, retain, and/or advance employment (e.g. completion of high school diploma or GED in a contextualized career pathway course; completion of bridge course)
- Provide support in job search and career exploration (a 12-hour transitions course taught by ABE instructor and

Navigator which includes job search and career exploration activities)

- Collaborate with Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical to design and develop bridge and certificate training in welding and truck driving as well as CNA and retail/customer service
- Coordinate recruitment of participants with WDI and Hispanic Outreach and wrap-around services from community partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Deliver bridge and certificate training in the four high-demand careers in the region: basic welding, truck driving, CNA, and retail/customer service
- Build a network of employers, industry representatives, and trade associations as meaningful partners
- Assist individuals to be trained and prepared in the region.

The project is innovative and impactful because it provides individuals who need a high school diploma or GED a training pathway that will be designed to include preparation for the GED exam in a contextualized format within one of the four career pathways. Collaborating with the partners indicated above is extremely important to the success of immigrants and low-skill, under-prepared adults in our community. By working together to accelerate education and training progress for low-skill and other workers, there is improved retention and achievement rates to reduce the time to completion of credentials. All participants are pre- and post-assessed to determine the individual's academic skill level. The results of the assessments are not only a requirement for ABE participants; they are also a useful guide for planning training needs and understanding skills gaps. All participants in this career pathway training initiative are dual-enrolled in Hiawatha Valley ABE. The project will be sustained by ABE contact hours funding (from these participants) and continued support from local community grants as funds become available.

Grand Rapids High School AFNR Department

KEY PARTNERS

Grand Rapids High School Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Department, high school students, parents, industry partners, postsecondary institutions

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (1,200 served)

AREA SERVED

Nearly 50 percent of Itasca County

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

The goals of the Grand Rapids AFNR Department are to expose secondary students to career pathways through instruction, Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), and FFA Career Development Events. By doing this, students are exposed to these career pathways and develop basic personal, professional and leadership skills needed in the workplace today. By participating, students gain some direction toward what they are or may not be good at. Participation makes them think about what they may want to do with their lives before leaving high school, which is a critical component to career pathway selection that leads to a greater chance of sustainability for the student and potential employer.

Hawley Agricultural Education Program

KEY PARTNERS

Hawley Independent School District, local businesses, local adult supporters, alumni group

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (grades 7-12)

AREA SERVED

Hawley Independent School District, eastern edge of Clay County

This program offers a variety of classes and units promoting agriculture and the many areas it involves. This is a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program that introduces students in grades 7-12 to career opportunities in the agriculture area so they can make education and career choices as they leave high school. We offer a lot of hands-on and inquiry-based learning, which allows the students to experience the lessons and actively participate in the learning. The program needs to remain flexible since many students have a hard time taking the classes because they often fill up their schedule with so many college classes in addition to the required classes. To recruit new students, the program needs to keep its classes new, innovative, and exciting so students will be interested.

HealthCare Pathway Program

KEY PARTNERS

Optivation (Bemidji State University/Northwest Technical College) and Northwest Indian OIC

TARGET POPULATION

American Indian individuals

AREA SERVED

Northwest Minnesota; Bemidji, Red Lake, Cass Lake

Northwest Indian OIC works to recruit, screen, and coach American Indian people out of poverty. One opportunity is to give these people, who successfully complete all the steps through the screening process, education in a field of interest. Optivation staff worked with OIC staff to train-the-trainer for non-credit courses providing CEUs in some essential skills (customer service, generations in the workplace). Then, the candidate attends Anishinaabe Worldview (culture) and Financial Skills for Life classes. These courses are designed to strengthen their ability to best manage their personal lives and some of the obstacles they face. They also earn CEUs. The candidate then select a career path that is of most interest to them. If they choose healthcare, for example, they will be eligible to take the nurse aid and home health aid course. This course is four credits from Northwest Technical College (NTC) and prepares the individual to take the certification exam and pursue employment as a nurse aid. Upon completion, the candidate may pursue employment or they can pursue additional education through NTC or other postsecondary institutions. The personal support and coaching services are provided by OIC. The educational opportunity is provided by Optivation. The sources of funding are diverse, including the Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP), FastTRAC, and TERO. We are working to build the program to include additional college credits and create (or offer existing) programs that are financial-aid eligible as well.

HealthCare Pathways

KEY PARTNERS

Anoka County WorkForce Center, Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE), Anoka Technical College, Anoka-Ramsey Community College

TARGET POPULATION

Public assistance recipients, individuals aged 18-24 that are unemployed/underemployed, minorities, low-skill individuals including English language learners and adult basic education learners

AREA SERVED

Anoka County

The goals of HealthCare Pathways are to get individuals started on a career pathway in healthcare and to help them achieve their first industry-recognized credential: Nursing Assistant/Home Health Aide. From there, the degree to which students obtain employment and/or further their college education is measured. What makes this approach impactful and innovative is the strong collaboration and support provided by the partners. A navigator from the WorkForce Center supports students throughout the program and helps to provide wrap-around services (daycare assistance, travel vouch-

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

ers, et cetera) that aid the individual through the training and after the training when seeking employment or enrolling in additional college courses. Adult Basic Education (ABE) holds a bridge class that helps students review foundational skills and gets them prepared for college level coursework. The ABE instructor then follows the students into their college classes to provide just-in-time support with study sessions or integrated instruction with the college instructors. This approach has been very successful for our target population and there are plans to continue it. Difficulties arise with funding the project to keep it sustainable. The project relies heavily on grant funding to provide these resources and tuition. Students do not take enough credits to be eligible for financial aid and they do not have the resources to pay for tuition out-of-pocket.

Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Project (HECAP)

KEY PARTNERS

Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Youth Councils, community-based youth service providers, local education agencies, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development Office of Youth Development

TARGET POPULATION

High school students and their families

AREA SERVED

Four Workforce Service Areas (Rural MN CEP, Northeast Minnesota, Hennepin-Carver, and Stearns-Benton)

The Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Program (HECAP) provides assistance to students in choosing careers and obtaining information about the education and training required for those careers. The program complements the work of Minnesota's public school counselors and addresses the following goals:

- Assisting high school students in selecting a career of interest to the student and a post-secondary path to prepare for that career
- Providing effective career counseling and labor market information to the region's youth and families in collaboration with school counselors
- Building on the work of the Local Workforce Investment Boards in identifying strategic industries and high-growth, in-demand occupations
- Raising local youth and parent awareness and usage of Minnesota's workforce development system and engaging local workforce, education and economic development partners

The pilot project was funded by the Legislature in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014 and 2015. Due to limited resources only three sites operated in SFY 2014; a fourth site (Hennepin-Carver) has been added for SFY 2015. In SFY 2014 the pilot sites served 1,448 youth through individualized services and 7,699 through group activities. DEED is proposing to bring HECAP activities under the umbrella of the Minnesota Youth Program to provide these services statewide, and requesting an increase in the MYP allocation to increase the number served under the HECAP component by an additional 15,000 youth. For more information about HECAP, visit: <http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/index/higher-education/index.jsp>.

International Institute of Municipal Clerks Advanced Academy

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University, Minnesota Clerks and Finance Officers Association

TARGET POPULATION

Current Minnesota clerks and finance officers

AREA SERVED

Statewide and beyond

The Academy provides graduates of the Minnesota Municipal Clerks Institute three-year program an opportunity to focus on an in-depth topic of importance to the profession. Clerks who have completed the requirements for the CMC designation may use this IIMC-approved program to earn points toward their IIMC Master Municipal Clerks level. The Advanced Academy is a must for those clerks who wish to grow in their personal and professional development.

International Institute of Municipal Clerks Athenian Dialogue

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University, Minnesota Clerks and Finance Officers Association

TARGET POPULATION

Current or future Minnesota clerks and finance officers

AREA SERVED

Statewide and beyond

Participants in this program earn Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) or Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) advanced

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

education points, transforming into leaders through an intense study and comparison of a chosen novel to their profession. For example, this year the clerks closely examine and discuss the book *Breaking Trail: A Climbing Life*, by Arlene Blum. They apply the book to the life of municipal clerks, and in doing so they learn how to challenge stereotypes, take chances, find balance, break barriers, and be a leader.

ISD 518 Agriculture Program

KEY PARTNERS

Independent School District 518, agriculture community

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

Southwest Minnesota

Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) visits are conducted during the summer. Staff visit students at their jobs and encourage good work habits, meet with employers if necessary, and help students obtain a job if necessary. There are many opportunities available to students, and sometimes they need help locating one. The program helps develop positive work habits that benefit the student and society. It is a positive way for the community to work with students. A barrier to sustainability is the cost of paying agriculture instructors to facilitate the program.

Medical Device Manufacturing and Assembly

KEY PARTNERS

Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Anoka County Work-Force Center, medical device manufacturers, LifeScience Alley, staffing/placement agencies

TARGET POPULATION

Entry-level workers, low-skill/low-wage individuals, underemployed individuals, dislocated workers

AREA SERVED

Northwest metro area and beyond

The goal of this program is to provide training for entry-level positions within Medical Device/BioMed Manufacturing industries. The program is built with a career track that will qualify trainees for advancement in the industry. Trainees will be able to choose a specialty area for additional education after the entry-level program. Specialty areas include: research and development technician, manufacturing technician (with

regulatory emphasis), test technician, quality assurance inspector, shipping/receiving/inventory control technician, clean/package/sterilization technician, and production group lead/line supervisor.

Minnesota Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource Programs (Secondary)

KEY PARTNERS

MN Department of Education, University of Minnesota Agricultural Education, Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC), MnSCU, local school districts

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (grades 7-12)

AREA SERVED

Statewide

These programs provide career exploration in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) pathways and preparation for AFNR and postsecondary education. Experiential learning opportunities in AFNR are facilitated through Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) included both placement (work-based learning) and entrepreneurship experiences. Leadership development is fostered through participation in local, region, state and national FFA activities. There are currently 187 AFNR programs with more than 230 teachers in Minnesota. In 2013-2014 these programs served approximately 20,000 students in grades 9-12. The biggest issue these programs face is the shortage of teachers. In 2014 there were roughly 40 openings in Minnesota. In addition, there is a need for extended day contracts; nearly 40 percent of our teachers have no extended days beyond their nine month contract. This limits student experiential learning and leadership opportunities during the summer months, at county and state fairs, and at FFA leadership conferences. Some innovative practices and curricula the AFNR programs use include:

- CASE (Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education)
- MyCAERT, an on-line curriculum library
- AET (Agriculture Experience Tracker, an on-line record system for SAE)
- Using Food Science as a curriculum to meet the state standards in Chemistry
- Using Agriculture Mechanics and Technology curriculum to meet the state standards in physics.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Minnesota FastTRAC

KEY PARTNERS

Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), community-based organizations, Adult Basic Education (ABE), MnSCU

TARGET POPULATION

Low-wage, low-skill adults

AREA SERVED

Statewide

Minnesota FastTRAC provides career pathway on-ramps for adults with both foundational and occupational skill training needs. The educational innovation is using adult basic education (ABE) to prepare adults with contextualized skill building (reading, writing, math) in an occupational sector and then using a paired instructional model through the first postsecondary credential training. The workforce innovation is intensive career navigation services including support services, intrusive advising, job placement and retention services. MN FastTRAC programs exist across the state, but in small numbers. The greatest chance of sustainability is to change overall practice in our education and workforce development systems to include the above strategies as the new way of doing business.

Minnesota Municipal Clerks Institute

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University, Minnesota Clerks and Finance Officers Association

TARGET POPULATION

Current or future Minnesota clerks and finance officers

AREA SERVED

Statewide and beyond

MMCI is a three-year continuing education program leading to professional accreditation. Individuals successfully completing the three-year certification program are awarded educational points toward the designation Certified Municipal Clerk by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. The MMCI, following IIMC professional development guidelines, recognizes the critical role of the municipal clerk and finance officer in serving both large and small cities. Planned by a committee of clerks, the program emphasizes professional development in the areas of public administration, social and interpersonal skills, and special topics addressing emerging issues in the field. The program provides opportunity for discussion and idea sharing among clerks and finance officers participating throughout Minnesota. Institute experience helps participants build a network for problem-solving that contin-

ues after the formal sessions end. Completion of the Institute is an important step toward professional achievement.

Minnesota State University-Mankato/ Customized Training

KEY PARTNERS

Minnesota State University-Mankato, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), area businesses/manufacturers, faculty, industry subject matter experts and other MnSCU school partners

TARGET POPULATION

Low – to medium-skill workers

AREA SERVED

Central and south central Minnesota

This program incorporates DEED Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) grants to help Minnesota companies train low – to medium-skill workers, creating a career path to grow within the organization. This encourages job advancement and business growth, thereby increasing job retention and the creation of new jobs. This is economically impactful to the state and the region in three ways. 1) Businesses have better-trained employees which improve their effectiveness on the job, streamline processes and allow for growth. 2) Employees with improved skill sets are promotable which increases family income. 3) A more skilled workforce encourages new companies to move to Minnesota. To be sustainable, the MJSP fund must continue to be supported and, to continue to add grants to help companies, staffing will need to increase to successfully manage the grant, the companies and the training schedules.

MnDOT Targeted Group Business Program within the Office of Civil Rights

KEY PARTNERS

MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT), MN Department of Administration

TARGET POPULATION

Minority- and female-owned businesses

AREA SERVED

Statewide

MnDOT's Targeted Group Business Program provides certified targeted group businesses with increased access to state contracting opportunities. The program is a new initiative that

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

began 2013 to significantly increase the number of certified targeted business firms who can bid on MnDOT projects. It identifies women and minority businesses and assists them in the state certification process by offering courses, meeting with subcontractors, engaging in outreach to Targeted Group Businesses, unbundling state contracts (i.e., to help small businesses the Departments of Administration and Transportation have started pilot projects to unbundle some state contracts to create additional bidding opportunities for small business and minority and female owned businesses).

MnDOT Transitioning from MFIP to Work

KEY PARTNERS

Metropolitan Council, MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT), MN Department of Human Services (DHS)

TARGET POPULATION

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) enrollees

AREA SERVED

Metro area

The MnDOT-DHS Partnership was established in 2009. The program ended in September, 2011 due to lack of DHS funding. The partnership was very successful in hiring MFIP participants to fill temporary positions of up to six months. During the period that funding was available, MnDOT hired 36 employees, temporary appointment extensions were granted for 11 positions, and nine temporary employees were hired to permanent positions.

MnDOT Transportation Specialist Program

KEY PARTNERS

MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Districts

TARGET POPULATION

Women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, veterans

AREA SERVED

Statewide

The Transportation Specialist Series is a career path within MnDOT that comprises approximately 46 percent of our workforce. The series begins at the Transportation Associate (TA) and has three levels within AFSCME to which incumbents can be promoted. The requirement is a Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Permit (meaning they only

have to pass a written test) and a pre-employment math and reading test. MnDOT provides training sufficient to qualify them for a Class A CDL and also trains them in their area of specialty (i.e., MnDOT has 17 different specialty areas). This allows MnDOT to bring in females, minorities, veterans and people with disabilities, some of whom may not have been able to acquire the CDL and/or requisite experience that is required at higher levels within the series.

MnDOT's Commercial Driver's License Training Program

KEY PARTNERS

MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT), federal government grants, public and private institutions, state agencies, nonprofit community-based organizations

TARGET POPULATION

Women, minorities

AREA SERVED

Statewide

MnDOT requests grant responses from public and private institutions of higher learning, other state agencies and nonprofit community-based organizations. Successful responders will be awarded a grant for the purpose of establishing a Class A Commercial vehicle Driver's License (CDL) and related skills training program. This CDL Training Program will provide high quality, hands-on highway heavy construction and roadway maintenance training and roadway maintenance positions with highway heavy construction contractors who have on-the-job (OJT) contract goals. The goal of this project is to increase participation of women, minority and under-represented individuals statewide on MnDOT highway heavy construction projects and within MnDOT's Transportation Specialist series.

M-Powered

KEY PARTNERS

Hennepin Technical College (HTC), HIRED, 15-member Business Advisory Board, Adult Basic Education (ABE)

TARGET POPULATION

Low-skill, low-wage, unemployed, and underemployed adults, immigrants and refugees, ex-offenders

AREA SERVED

Suburban Hennepin County

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

M-Powered was developed to help address the unemployment challenges and close the manufacturing skilled worker shortage with a fast-track training program. It is designed to transition unemployed adults into high-skill, high-wage careers by providing their first step onto the career ladder in in-demand manufacturing jobs. Demand-driven and employer-focused, for close to 10 years M-Powered has brought together a broad coalition of partners to create and sustain a fast-track training program for students interested in a lifelong, technical career in Minnesota's precision manufacturing industry. The success of the 10-year program is derived from the spirit of cooperation of these partners, who have a shared interest in a successful outcome but different ways of approaching and measuring success. Hennepin Technical College (HTC) and HIRED work collaboratively to align education, training and support services that link quality candidates with employer needs. HTC provides instructors and facilities. HIRED, a community-based organization, provides case management and employability skills-building. An advisory board of area employers, state and local economic development professionals, manufacturing associations and community partners, co-convened by HTC and HIRED, assisted with curriculum development. M-Powered is modeled as a career pathways sector initiative. In the past ten years M-Powered has successfully worked with more than 700 participants in Minnesota, and was successfully ported to South Africa as a basis for their new Tool, Die and Mold molding making Apprenticeship program.

Northome School

KEY PARTNERS

Northome School

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (grades 7-12)

AREA SERVED

North Central Minnesota

The Northome School provides an agricultural and industrial technology education program for grades 7-12 with some programs starting as early as Kindergarten in a small rural community in Northern Minnesota

Perham High School Agriculture Department

KEY PARTNERS

Perham High School

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

Perham-Dent Independent School District 549

The goal of the Perham High School Agriculture program is to prepare students for the world of work in multiple agriculture and technical pathways. The program makes an impact by working with students all year so they can see the start-to-finish agriculture pathway and goals. The program plans to get more hours in the summer when there are many learning opportunities for learning about Agriculture in a real world setting.

Pharmacy Technician

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud Technical and Community College, St. Cloud WorkForce Center, CentraCare Health System, Minnesota Board of Pharmacy, Coborn's Pharmacy, Village Pharmacy, Southside Pharmacy, and Sartell Apothecary

TARGET POPULATION

Young adults, long-term unemployed individuals

AREA SERVED

St. Cloud area

The ultimate goal of this program is to train people in becoming a pharmacy technician. Currently the program is 145 hours. There are 45 hours of residential class time, 20 hours of online class work, and 80 hours of clinical experience. The coursework includes learning medical terminology related to common pharmacy work orders, as well as reading, interpreting, and dispensing prescriptions. Students learn dosage calculations, conversions, error checking, and inventory control along with billing, coding, and reimbursement guidelines. Upon completion of the training and clinical experience, students take the national exam known as Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT) required by the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy in order to continue to work in a pharmacy setting. Since applying for our variance last fall and gaining approval, our pass rate for this exam has been 100 percent. We continue to monitor trends and meet with community partners to update our curriculum and standards to meet the changing landscape of the pharmacy environment and bring these changes back to

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

the classroom, so that are students get up-to-date information that they can apply in their clinical experience. Some of the challenges in this course are that it is currently 15 weeks, and for those where math was originally challenging the pharmaceutical math portion does seem daunting, though staff strive to keep participants motivated and to simplify this portion of the course as much as possible. The cost of the program to participants who do not meet the requirements for WIA dollars also limits those who can take this course.

Phlebotomy

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud Technical and Community College, St. Cloud WorkForce Center, CentraCare Health System, HealthPartners

TARGET POPULATION

Young adults, Somali and other minority populations

AREA SERVED

St. Cloud area

The ultimate goal of this program is to train people to become phlebotomists. Currently the program is 48 hours. There are 24 hours of class and lab time which trains students in medical terminology, human anatomy, laboratory safety procedures, health care law and ethics, and drawing blood. Students then complete a 24-hour clinical experience. This approach allows students to train and gain phlebotomy experience in a timely manner in order to apply for the many phlebotomy openings that are open in the area. It has also met the need for professional development of dental assistants and nurses, both registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, who did not receive phlebotomy training and wish they would have had this experience since they work in outpatient clinics. One of the challenges we are striving to meet is that some of the larger organizations want ASCP-certified phlebotomists which require longer programing and clinical time. After surveying the interest of current students taking this course, Phlebotomy I and Phlebotomy II courses are being planned. Those who wish to have PBT (ASCP)—Route 2 certification will need to take Phlebotomy II which will have 16 hours of class time with more in-depth human anatomy and physiology, lab-procedures, and advance phlebotomy procedures. It will also have additional 76 hours of clinical time to meet the 100 successful lab draws the certification requires.

Phoenix / SEEDs / Summer SEEDs and STEP-UP / St. Paul Right Track

KEY PARTNERS

MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Project Lead the Way, City of Minneapolis, AchieveMpls, high schools (Patrick Henry, North, South, Washburn, Johnson, Bemidji)

TARGET POPULATION

Minorities, women, students with disabilities, economically-disadvantaged students

AREA SERVED

Statewide

The Phoenix program is an partnership between MnDOT and Project Lead the Way, which provides paid internships for high school students enrolled in pre-engineering courses. SEEDs provides employment and career track opportunities. Participants are largely high school seniors and college, university, trades, business and technical school students. The SEEDs program celebrates a 21st anniversary in 2014. Over 600 students have been hired as SEEDs students and the placement rate after leaving the program is 82 percent. Summer SEEDs Program/Minneapolis Step-Up Program is a partnership between MnDOT and the City of Minneapolis that provides summer youth education and employment opportunities at MnDOT. Students are exposed to career opportunities and encouraged to attend a two or four year college program. Many students transition to the regular SEEDs program after their summer job is over. Achieve Minneapolis provides critical job training and hands-on experience for Minneapolis youth. MnDOT has employed 3 to 5 candidates every summer. Right Track is Saint Paul's pipeline for youth career development and for building a diverse future workforce and was established in 2014. MnDOT was unable to participate in 2014, but will do so in future summers.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED**Ready to Work Minnesota** *(proposal pending)***KEY PARTNERS**

Minnesota's 16 Workforce Services Areas (WSAs), HealthForce Minnesota, Minnesota healthcare employers, education and training providers including MnSCU, University of Minnesota School of Nursing, St. Catherine University, Platform to Employment, Creating IT Futures

TARGET POPULATION

Long-term unemployed individuals

AREA SERVED

Statewide

This program will provide a range of activities that lead long-term unemployed, underemployed, or incumbent workers to middle- and high-skill employment. The program will engage in a number of activities, including outreach and recruitment, intake, assessment, supportive services needs payments and specialized supportive services, career guidance and life skills, coaching, counseling, short-term or accelerated training, and longer-term training leading to degrees and/or industry recognized credentials. In addition, the program will offer several opportunities for work-based training, including on-the-job training (OJT), paid work experience, paid internships, and registered apprenticeships. Credentials offered include certificates, diplomas, certifications, licensure, degrees (associates, bachelors, masters), and completion of industry work requirements, such as continuing education units, clinical hours, and /or work experience. The approach reinforces Minnesota's commitment to career pathways and addresses employment needs of the long-term unemployed by providing individualized and intensive services. The H1B Ready to Work program will help establish a solid career pathways approach of serving the needs of adults into mid – and higher levels of employment and provide a model that might be replicated in other industry sectors.

Scrubs Camp**KEY PARTNERS**

HealthForce Minnesota, Winona State University, Saint Paul College, Augsburg College, Rochester Public School District, Southeast Technical College, various healthcare employers and community organizations and foundations

TARGET POPULATION

High school and middle school students

AREA SERVED

Various locations throughout the state

Started in 2008, Scrubs Camp provides a unique opportunity for middle school and high school students to explore careers in the health sciences. A collaborative project between HealthForce Minnesota, educational institutions, and healthcare employers, Scrubs Camps are offered throughout the summer at multiple locations. Campers experience a variety of interactive hands-on activities and special field trips to get them excited about careers in the health sciences. Sessions are led by healthcare professionals and/or faculty from several area colleges and universities.

Short-Term HealthCare Programs Leading to Certification: Nursing Assistant and Technicians for EKG, Pharmacy and Phlebotomy**KEY PARTNERS**

Dakota Community and Technical College, Inver Hills Community College, WorkForce Centers

TARGET POPULATION

Unemployed individuals, vocational rehabilitation consumers, and career changes seeking entry-level positions

AREA SERVED

Dakota and Scott Counties

The goals of these short-term open enrollment programs are to provide training in these entry-level careers and to prepare the student for a national or state certification exam. The Nursing Assistant program provides a solid base in the healthcare field and can be enhanced by the addition of the other certifications, providing more flexibility for the student and added value for the employer. The certifications are standalone and students can gain employment with these specific skill sets: Certified EKG Technician (CET) from the National Healthcareer Association, Phlebotomy Technician (PBT) from the American Society for Clinical Pathology, and Certified Pharmacy

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Technician (CPhT) from the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board. The Phlebotomy Technician program includes an “on-the-job” 100-hour clinical component supported by a variety of healthcare providers such as the Allina and Fairview systems. The Pharmacy Technician program follows its own path and one challenge has been adjusting to new guidelines from the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy requiring new technicians to obtain an “educational component” once they register. Our program is not approved as an “educational component” because it does not include an externship, but the 51 hours of content has been approved by the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy to count towards the didactic portion on an employer-based program. This course is most beneficial then to students who secure a position with an employer who has a Minnesota Board of Pharmacy-approved employer-based training program which will allow the student to meet the new regulations of an “education component”. All of these short-term programs are impactful because students can gain employment after a relatively short time frame (about 3-10 weeks) with reasonable costs (about \$900-\$1700) and get started down a career path in health care.

South Central Pathways to Health Care Careers

KEY PARTNERS

Area Adult Learning Cooperative, Faribault County Adult Basic Education (ABE), Mankato Area ABE, Southwest ABE, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development–Job Service, Minnesota Valley Action Council, South Central Workforce Council, South Central College, MRCI WorkSource, Oak Terrace, St. Luke’s, Minnesota Valley Health Care, Mankato Clinic, Ecumen-Pathstone, Mapleton Community Home, Madelia Lutheran Home

TARGET POPULATION

Low-skill, low-income adults including public assistance recipients, high school drop-outs, individuals from communities of color, older workers, and the long-term unemployed

AREA SERVED

South central Minnesota (nine counties in Economic Development Region 9)

The goal of the South Central Pathways to Health Care Careers is to address the workforce shortages of the health care industry and skill shortages of adult learners by the development and delivery of a Pathways to Health Care Careers bridge course and integrated instruction in Basic Nursing, Medical Terminology, and First Aid/CPR that results in a Certified Nursing Assistant credential, First Aid/CPR certification, nine stackable credits, and skilled workers for the health care industry. Learners participating in the bridge course have

the opportunity to increase their basic skill levels through contextualized curriculum that exposes them to basic nursing skills and career opportunities in the health care industry.

Outcomes include:

- 91 percent completed integrated instruction and received credits/credential
- 88 percent placed in employment or continued their education
- \$10.40 average wage at placement

Innovations include:

- Contextualized basic skills instruction in bridge course
- Integrated instruction between South Central College and Adult Basic Education
- Career counseling, job search assistance and additional supports provided by Workforce Navigator
- All courses at South Central College are for-credit – opportunity to earn 9 credits and credentials
- WIA Adult tuition/support assistance for individuals completing bridge course

With regard to sustainability:

- ABE instruction sustainable through seat-time funding
- Commitment of WIA Adult tuition assistance for individuals completing bridge course sustains integrated instruction/training
- Barriers to sustainability: no consistent source of funding for Workforce Navigator

South Central Pathways to Manufacturing Careers

KEY PARTNERS

Area Adult Learning Cooperative, Faribault County Adult Basic Education (ABE), Mankato Area ABE, Southwest ABE, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development–Job Service, Minnesota Valley Action Council, MRCI WorkSource, South Central College, South Central Workforce Council, Armour Ekrich, Independent School District #77, Poet Refining, Michael Foods, Tony Downs

TARGET POPULATION

Low-skill, low-income adults including public assistance recipients, high school drop-outs, individuals from communities of color, older workers, and the long-term unemployed

AREA SERVED

South central Minnesota (nine counties in Economic Development Region 9)

The goal of South Central Pathways to Manufacturing Careers is to address the workforce shortages of the manufacturing

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

industry and the skill shortages of low-wage/low-skill adults by the development and delivery of Pathways to Manufacturing Careers bridge course and integrated instruction in either Computer Integrated Machining, Industrial Maintenance Mechatronics or Facilities Maintenance at South Central College. Learners completing integrated instruction will earn an industry recognized credential and 16-19 stackable credits. The program aligns the expertise and resources of business, ABE, South Central College and workforce development partners.

Southwest Minnesota Career Pathways/FastTRAC

KEY PARTNERS

Workforce Development Partners (Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Rehabilitation Services, Job Service), Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Southwest Minnesota Adult Basic Education (ABE) Consortium, Marshall Area Technology and Education Center (MA-TEC), economic development partners, business, secondary schools

TARGET POPULATION

Low-income individuals, English language learners, individuals with disabilities, youth

AREA SERVED

Southwest Minnesota (14 counties in Workforce Service Area 6)

This program includes both youth and adult initiatives:

Youth Program/Initiative: Considered both a career pathway and an experiential learning opportunity, the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (SW MN PIC) Young Adult Healthcare Career Pathway program is fundamental career and technical skills training which concentrates on the healthcare field. Components include career pathway training, basic skills development, computer literacy, work readiness skill development, work experience, support services, and attainment of industry recognized credentials and postsecondary education credits. Project outcomes include skill attainment, successful completion of industry recognized credentials (NCRC, First Aid, CPR, Med Term, CNA, and TMA), college credits, job placement, job retention, enrollment in higher education career pathway/degree programs and enhanced awareness of resources and opportunities for career advancement. Partners include Minnesota West Community and Technical College (MN West), Marshall Area Technology and Education Center (MA-TEC), and Southwest Minnesota ABE. A Certified Nursing Assistant class was offered. Participants are recruited from Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP), the Minnesota Family Investment

Program (MFIP; mostly teen parents), school districts and other key partners. Training sites include MN West campuses and MA-TEC.

Adult Program/Initiative: The intended outcomes of the adult initiative include higher skill attainment for participants, including earning marketable credentials and/or college credits; job placement in family-supporting employment; job retention; enrollment in higher education career pathway/degree program; and enhanced awareness of resources and opportunities for career advancement. Career pathway initiatives have focused on healthcare and manufacturing, two of the most high-demand industries in the region. Since 2011, nearly 200 participants have completed the training programs and earned college credits and industry credentials; 75 percent of those have obtained new employment and improved their earning capacity by up to \$8.00 per hour; approximately 30 percent of the participants have increased their literacy comprehension by two steps; and approximately eight percent have continued their career path, entered college and completed a college degree.

There is a strong, well-established partnership in southwest Minnesota that works together to meet the needs of customers. The region covers a large geographic area, and the partnership has been able to offer career pathway trainings in most of the areas in the region. Employer partners are key to the development of the training programs, ensuring that the initiative is meeting business needs as well as the needs of the trainees. The combination of support from all partners, including employers, postsecondary, workforce development, and adult education is a key factor in helping the participants have a positive experience and achieve success. As career pathway initiatives continue to show success, they are being incorporated more and more into workforce development, adult education, and postsecondary education in the region, resulting in system changes. One example of this is the short-term manufacturing training that has been offered in the welding and industrial maintenance area has now been approved by MnSCU to be offered for credit by MN West. This will enhance the career pathway potential for the participants, as well as carrying the potential for these classes to be eligible for financial aid, which will support sustainability. Both the Adult and Youth initiatives are transitioning from being almost exclusively grant-funded, to being partially supported by partner matching funds and leveraged resources. A challenge to sustainability, however, continues to be funding, especially for project Navigator positions. While the partnership has been successful in applying for grants and braiding funds from multiple resources, it is difficult to plan for long-term operation and development without a dedicated funding source.

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Spring Leadership Institute

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University, other Minnesota public and private higher education institutions

TARGET POPULATION

Mid-level higher education administrators

AREA SERVED

Statewide and beyond

This one-day Institute focuses on issues of concern to women in higher education, but participation by higher education administrators from both genders is highly encouraged. Each year a new topic is chosen for an in-depth focus, and topic examination is achieved through both presentations and small group discussion. Proceeds from the event go directly back to students in the M.S. and Ed.D. programs in Higher Education Administration at St. Cloud State University, in the form of scholarships.

West Central Area Agricultural Education Program / West Central Area FFA

KEY PARTNERS

Minnesota FFA, West Central Area High School, local agricultural businesses

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

West central Minnesota

The purpose of the Ag. program is to give students hands on, real world training for future careers in industry. The approach is to let students learn by doing. The FFA program also teaches not only hands on learning, but also excellent leadership skills. Students will be encouraged to be a part of the program and once in it will see the value and encourage others students to join the program and receive real world training. The program is currently limited by the number of students in the school district and only nine months of contract time for the Agriculture Education teacher.

Workforce Investment Act Youth Program

KEY PARTNERS

Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Youth Councils, community-based youth service providers, local education agencies, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development Office of Youth Development

TARGET POPULATION

Economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth, ages 14-21

AREA SERVED

Statewide

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth program provides economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth with the job skills and knowledge to become productive workers in Minnesota's future labor force. Short-term program goals are unique to the individual and are updated and reassessed as the participant moves through the program. Long-term goals relate to educational attainment, placement in jobs important to the regional economy and training that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential. Through the leadership of the local WIBs/Youth Councils, Minnesota's WIA Youth Program provides comprehensive services to youth who are experiencing the opportunity gap and the achievement gap. Youth with disabilities are served at a level that is over three times the national average; foster youth, juvenile offenders, homeless youth and runaways, approximately twice the national average; American Indian youth, five times the national average and Asian American youth, 2.5 times the national average. Funds are appropriated by Congress and allocated to the states and local areas based on a formula prescribed by federal law. All areas of Minnesota are served by this program but each year a significant number of youth are unable to be served due to the limited resources. For more information about WIA Youth Program: <http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wia-youth.jsp>

CAREER PATHWAYS CONTINUED

Youth Apprenticeship

KEY PARTNERS

Secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, employers, Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI), WorkForce Centers, local Chambers of Commerce, Vocational Rehabilitation Services

TARGET POPULATION

Students 16 and older

AREA SERVED

Albert Lea

Students are provided both secondary instruction, and on-the-job training (OJT)/awareness of the manufacturing sector. Each student is required to fulfill a 450/900 hour checklist that encompasses many of the manufacturing positions offered within a manufacturing setting. Before they start their OJT they complete the Work Readiness Certification at the local WorkForce Center. Postsecondary credits/credentials and articulated credit are continually researched and offered. This successful project has received National Awards as well as endorsement from Senator Klobuchar.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Academies of Alexandria

KEY PARTNERS

Alexandria School District 206, community partners

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (1,200 served)

AREA SERVED

Alexandria

The mission of this program is to achieve educational excellence and to inspire a life-long passion for learning. The school district achieves this mission by instilling the following core values:

- We act with integrity, honoring the Code of Conduct – Respect, Honesty, Kindness, Responsibility, and Fairness.
- We are responsive to the diverse needs of all learners.
- We are dedicated to providing relevant and rigorous learning experiences.
- We prepare all learners to be contributing citizens in an ever-changing world.
- We are committed to the safety of all students and staff.
- We nurture relationships utilizing leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- We are committed to strengthening the school and community through partnerships and collaboration.
- We assure accountability through shared, data-driven decision making.

The Academies of Alexandria will provide each student with rigorous academics and interactive learning to ensure equal opportunities to every student across the board. Once full implementation has been reached we will have achieved wall-to-wall learning through the following four academies: The Freshman Academy; Engineering, Manufacturing Technologies and Natural Resources (EMTN); Health Sciences and Human Services (H and H); and Business, Communication, and Entrepreneurship. In the past, earning dual credits was optional for those that chose to take part in excelled learning. The Academies will not operate as an add-on program; instead this implementation will provide each graduate with professional certifications, college credits, and increased career awareness. Each Academy will include:

- Rigorous and relevant core curriculum (math, English, social studies, science)
- General career pathways
- Career ladder opportunities:
 - » Career ready
 - » 2-year college
 - » 4-year college
- Shared teachers

- College credit opportunities (Advanced Placement and dual credit)
- Professional certification opportunities

In the coming year District 206 will complete construction on Alexandria Area High School and continue implementation of the Academies of Alexandria, and within those walls will begin an entirely unique approach to teaching and learning.

Agricultural Education Extended Contract Time

KEY PARTNERS

Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE), Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council, Martin County West School District

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (grades 7-12)

AREA SERVED

Martin County

In the 7-12 grade program, students are required to complete Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects outside of class time. Through these projects, students have the opportunity to volunteer, work, start their own business, shadow, or learn specific skills necessary to develop their career readiness skill set. We use our extended contract time in the summer to visit these students projects, assist with record keeping and goal setting, and take pictures to document what they are doing.

Animal Science

KEY PARTNERS

Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District Career and Technical Education

TARGET POPULATION

Individuals 16 to 21

AREA SERVED

Intermediate School District 916

This program provides hands-on learning for students interested in animals, including pets, exotic species, and large animals. The program covers husbandry, health, anatomy and breed identification. Students work with real animals on-site as well as doing observations outside of school. The curriculum meets science standards as well as national agriculture standards. The curriculum is based on advice from an advisory committee to meet industry needs and to prepare students for

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

further education. The main barriers to this type of education is funding. Teaching in the above fashion is costly and current trends are eliminating programs that cost the most regardless of how many students benefit from this type of learning.

Albert Lea Youth Apprenticeship Program

KEY PARTNERS

Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce, Albert Lea Area Schools, Lou-Rich, Innovance, Workforce Development, Inc.

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

Statewide

The Albert Lea Youth Apprenticeship program is working successfully to fill the Skills Gap identified by the 2011 DEED survey of Minnesota manufacturers. Over two years ago, the Albert Lea Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce's Business Education Committee (BEC), also identified the same skills gap and began discussions between Albert Lea Area Schools and several local businesses.

The program began in December 2012. The manufacturing firm Lou-Rich has played a critical role. The average employee at Lou-Rich is 43 years old. Many employees have worked with Lou-Rich for over 20 years and are looking at retirement within 5-10 years. The company will be losing highly skilled, experienced employees. According to Lou-Rich's Human Resources Coordinator, "I am involved in the Youth Apprenticeship program as a strategic plan to help with the skills gap."

The program is making a difference. As a Lou-Rich employee says about the apprentice he mentored, "It's been a pleasure working with him. From day one, his confidence in a manufacturing environment has grown. He is maintaining a willingness to learn different jobs and new skills. I foresee a nice "kickback" to local businesses from the Youth Apprenticeship program."

Applied Learning Institute

KEY PARTNERS

Northeast Higher Education District (NHED) Colleges, 26 regional high schools, industry, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB)

TARGET POPULATION

High school students (grades 10-12)

AREA SERVED

Iron Range and Northeast Minnesota

The goal of the Applied Learning Institute (ALI) is to renew technical education in northeast Minnesota. ALI offers a series of programs for college credit that take place in local high schools. These classes ladder into technical programs at NHED colleges. Classes are hands-on and project-based, using state-of-the-art equipment and taught by both high school and college faculty. Programs of study are based on high-growth, high-demand occupation projections and include Pre-Engineering, Industrial Technology, Industrial Construction, Healthcare, and Transportation. ALI has tremendous regional support from industry and economic development as well as a sustainable funding stream. The scalability of ALI to a statewide level is dependent on the strength of regional networking, leadership and relationship building.

BestPrep

KEY PARTNERS

3M, Cargill, Ecolab, General Mills, area employers, local schools and educators

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

Statewide

BestPrep helps students and teachers in Minnesota gain business and career skills through experiences. With the initial volunteer and financial support of 3M, Cargill, Ecolab, General Mills and Peavey, BestPrep was at the forefront of a national trend of connecting students and educational institutions with members of business, government and social services. By connecting students with members of corporate America, participants gain first-hand exposure and experience to what life after school is really like.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

Bridges Career Academies and Workplace Connection

KEY PARTNERS

Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Central Lakes College, Central Minnesota Carl Perkins Consortium (23 schools)

TARGET POPULATION

Students (10,000+ served)

AREA SERVED

Crow Wing, southern Cass, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Aitkin, Todd, and Wadena Counties

Bridges Career Academies and Workplace Connection creates a free-flowing communication link between K-12 and postsecondary institutions, employers, and local communities in an effort to help the next generation of workforce become better prepared to meet the demands of local employers. The Bridges Career Academies and Workplace Connection focuses on two areas of development for students:

- The Career Academies is a sequence of courses focusing on career pathways that begin in high school and are taken for dual college and high school credit. Curriculum is developed through collaboration with college instructors, high school instructors and industry representatives.
- The Workplace Connection, coordinated by the Brainerd Lakes Chamber, is an intermediary between schools and business to integrate work-based learning through Job Shadowing, Internships, Business Tours, Speakers Bureau for the Classroom, Career Immersion Camps, and a Career Exploration Day.

Goals and outcomes of the programs include:

- Bridging the gap between career development, secondary and postsecondary education and employment.
- Addressing local employment needs.
- Targeting students in the Middle Majority. The Bridges

Program activities and academies are innovative in that they seek to fundamentally change the way students explore and determine their future careers. Because the activities are designed to link education with real-life experiences, students are able to determine the career that best fits their interests and skills. Local businesses and industries have partnered with Bridges in an effort to grow a knowledgeable and skilled employee base and therefore positively impact local economic development. If the Bridges Program is to continue to grow and develop, there is a need for consistent communication and education regarding the program's mission and goals. The Bridges Leadership Council must continue planning strategically and maintain strong relationships and participation

among the business and educational community leaders. The Bridges Program staff must continue to collect and share the 'success stories' of student participants and monitor changes in local employment statistics if business is to maintain their level of volunteerism. The Bridges Leadership Council is engaged in strategic planning in the summer/fall 2014 to determine next steps to ensure sustainability.

Caledonia High School Career and Technical Education Agriculture/FFA

KEY PARTNERS

Students, Caledonia Area Public Schools District 299, community partners

TARGET POPULATION

High school students and FFA members 21 and younger

AREA SERVED

Caledonia School District

Students are provided with the opportunity to experience what they learn whether in a school shop, classroom, outdoor growing lab, or with the supervised experience program they are involved in. In the shop students are able to apply the skills they have acquired to construct or repair a selected project. In the outdoor growing lab students research, select and harvest fruits and vegetables that can be used in the school lunch program. Within supervised experience programs students are able to manage all aspects of their learning to increase skills and competencies in their selected experience. The approach and its success has always drawn from the use of the Agricultural Education model. The main barrier over the past several years is the reduction or elimination of extended contracts of Agricultural Educators. Summer contact time with students has been lost. Summer instruction to enhance student learning and project development has also been reduced or lost.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

Central Minnesota Advanced Manufacturing On-the-Job Training

KEY PARTNERS

Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services, Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board, Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association, East Central 53 Regional Development Commission, Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission, Cambridge Metals and Plastics, Advance Design and Systems, Minnesota Rubber and Plastics, Motek-TEAM Industries, Von Ruden Manufacturing, Metal Craft Machine and Engineering

TARGET POPULATION

Unemployed and long-term unemployed individuals

AREA SERVED

Central Minnesota

Through a U.S. Department of Labor training grant awarded to Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (CMJTS), over 55 individuals will be served and obtain credentials and on-the-job (OJT) training. Targeted OJT occupations for this project are within high-demand advanced manufacturing occupations. Participants learn new skills in mid- to upper-level career ladder manufacturing jobs. During the OJT, the participant also earns a nationally recognized manufacturing credential valued by the industry, the employer, and the participant for the occupation.

Each OJT participant is assessed for eligibility and ability to benefit from training, including level of education, interest in the career field, current skills, ability to work, and willingness to earn a credential. CMJTS and the employer, with appropriate input from the candidate, develop and implement the OJT plan. The employer allows or facilitates the earning of the related credential identified on the training plan. The credential may be earned off-site, online, in a classroom, and/or through an evaluator/proctor process. CMJTS provides case management and support services to the OJT trainee throughout the length of the contract.

Communication and Science Disorders Professional Experiential Learning Graduate Program

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University, Universidad de Concepcion Chile (UdeC)

TARGET POPULATION

Graduate students

AREA SERVED

Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne counties

The goals are manyfold: to help students obtain multicultural knowledge and language skills by carrying out and reflecting upon Public Health Speech Pathology services offered to underserved communities in Concepcion, Chile, under the supervision of Speech Pathologist professionals and faculty from both countries; to fine-tune skills learned in their classrooms; and to create an awareness of how health-related needs are met for underserved communities. This type of program provides the students an experience that builds additional marketable skills for future employment and professional advancement, and allows them to shadow Speech Pathologist professionals in clinical sites in Concepcion. This program faces financial barriers for the American students (travel expenses).

Construction Laborers Education, Apprenticeship, and Training Program

KEY PARTNERS

Laborers Union, union contractors in varied industries

TARGET POPULATION

New and incumbent construction workers

AREA SERVED

Minnesota and North Dakota

This program has two main goals. The first is to train new construction laborer apprentices in safety procedures and skills needed on the job. The second is to train journey worker laborers on new skills and help them to diversify their skill sets. The most unique part of our program is that it is funded and governed entirely by a joint employer and union cooperative agreement. We do not receive funding from government entities.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

Custom Training Services at MState

KEY PARTNERS

Minnesota State Community and Technical College, businesses and individuals in Minnesota and North Dakota

TARGET POPULATION

Individuals post-college to retirement

AREA SERVED

Minnesota and North Dakota

Custom Training Services (CTS) supports business and industry growth in Minnesota and North Dakota. For over 20 years the CTS mission has been to work with companies to help them expand and become more efficient in developing a skilled workforce. CTS provides skills and technology training for individuals and organizations in the communities of Fargo, Moorhead, Wadena, Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes, and surrounding areas in Minnesota and North Dakota. Training is available on-site, on campus, or online. CTS targets individuals interested in upgrading their skills to earn continuing education units (CEUs), medical refresher courses, and testing for RN, LPN, or CNA positions. Additionally, CTS provides training in the fields of personnel development, leadership, management, sales, IT and software, welding, technical, mechanical, and manufacturing. CTS works with companies, organizations, and individuals to develop and design courses to fit specific needs through customization based on their needs. Upcoming training opportunities are listed at <http://minnesota.augusoft.net>.

CTS serves approximately 6,700 students annually providing over 90,000 hours of training. The program has worked with over 500 companies in Minnesota and North Dakota offering contract training or open enrollment classes. CTS evaluates its programs regularly to ensure satisfaction at multiple levels throughout the organization and throughout the project. CTS guarantees that it will meet every outcome agreed to or redeliver services until satisfied.

Dassel-Cokato High School Agriculture Department

KEY PARTNERS

Dassel-Cokato High School Agriculture Department, Dassel-Cokato FFA

TARGET POPULATION

High school students engaged in agricultural education

AREA SERVED

Central Minnesota

The Dassel-Cokato Agriculture Department and FFA Chapter works to provide an estimated 250 high school students with experiential learning opportunities in and around agriculture throughout the school year and summer. Each year all students enrolled in agriculture courses must complete a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). An SAE provides the student with the opportunity to explore agriculture and potentially find careers that may interest them as a part of the process. All students select an SAE that falls within their interest area. Some examples of SAEs include working for a local farmer, growing a small garden with the purpose of learning how to can vegetables, landscaping for a neighbor, researching new ways to raise house plants, et cetera. SAEs are impactful because they allow students to explore their interests while forcing them to reflect on those experiences. This intentional reflection teaches them how to learn from their experiences and also helps them to consider their interests as they prepare to choose a career path. Although SAEs are established in the Dassel-Cokato Agriculture Department, they cannot even begin to be truly successful until ample staffing is available to get instruction to happen at each student's SAE location. The agriculture teacher must have the time available to meet with students at their work site or research site along with their mentor, parents, or boss to discuss learning goals and outcomes. Currently there are 160 hours of extended contract time available for the agriculture instructor to complete summer agriculture program activities. With a host of other summer events occurring, only about 10 hours of the 160 are available for SAE visits. There must be one hour available for each student to have at least a basic SAE site visit.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It.

KEY PARTNERS

African Family and Education Center, ECHO Food Shelf, Greater Mankato Diversity Council, LA-MANO, Inc., Latin American Multi-Ethnic Association for Networking and Opportunities, MRCI WorkSource, Mankato Area Adult Basic Education, Minnesota Valley Action Council, South Central Service Cooperative, South Central WorkForce Council

TARGET POPULATION

Youth ages 16-24 from communities of color

AREA SERVED

South central Minnesota

Through Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It. youth participated in a variety of project-based activities throughout the school year. Youth attended workshops on job search techniques, career exploration, labor market information and in-demand occupations, the value of postsecondary education, entrepreneurial opportunities, goal setting, connections to community resources, life skills training, and financial fitness training. Youth participated in field trips including: tours of local businesses to gain hands on exposure to potential careers in demand occupations and industries in the area; visits to local colleges and universities to learn about postsecondary options and visits to local WorkForce Centers to ensure that all youth are aware of the services available to connect to education and employment opportunities throughout their lifetime.

FUSION IT Residency Program for Application and Web Development

KEY PARTNERS

Advance IT Minnesota, Metropolitan State University, Minnesota State University-Mankato, approximately eight current employer partners

TARGET POPULATION

Students with a related 2-year degree or equivalent coursework

AREA SERVED

Greater metro area

The FUSION IT Residency is an 18-24 month, eight-credit, experiential learning component that provides students with 2000+ hours of paid work experience while completing a bachelor's degree in application and web development. Students are employed by the universities as student workers, and work in accordance with terms defined by IRS student worker regulations. The universities then have an income contract with employers who utilize students as part of their

onsite work teams in work related to app development. This is a new program so employment outcome data will not be available for about two years, but based on the seven-year history of one of our partners, Maverick Software Consulting, and projected labor market demand, we can realistically expect a 100 percent employment rate. Administration of the program is funded through a wage premium paid by employers partners. So for example, the beginning student wage rate is \$14.00 per hour and employers pay the university \$18.00 per hour. This has the added benefit of transforming the last two years of education into positive cash flow rather than taking on additional debt. A secondary objective of the program is to support early-stage and smaller companies with access to this source of talent development that until recently was only available to large companies. For more information, see <http://www.advanceitmn.org/fusion>

Genesys Works

KEY PARTNERS

Various metro-area high schools and corporate partners

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

Twin Cities Metro

Genesys Works is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building bridges between economically disadvantaged high school students, businesses seeking technology-proficient workers, and an inner-city public education system struggling to produce high-quality, market-ready graduates.

Genesys Works-Twin Cities was created in 2008 to transform the lives of minority and low-income youth in Minneapolis and St. Paul while serving the business needs of the Twin Cities corporate community.

Throughout the program, students realize firsthand that they can thrive in a corporate environment and that pursuing a professional career can help them achieve a much higher standard of living than they are accustomed to. With this knowledge and continuous guidance from the Genesys Works staff, they significantly redefine their long-term goals and set plans to pursue them. In fact, over 95 percent of Genesys Works graduates enroll in college immediately after high school, and most are the first in their family to do so.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

Hawthorne Education Center Partnership

KEY PARTNERS

Winona State University–Rochester Departments of Nursing and Education, Rochester Public Schools, Rochester Community Education

TARGET POPULATION

Immigrants and their families, adults seeking basic skills

AREA SERVED

Rochester

Undergraduate and graduate students in the Education and Nursing programs at Winona State University–Rochester receive extensive, real-world, hands-on learning through a partnership with Community Education of the Rochester Public Schools, serving adult learners and their families within the Hawthorne Education Center. Students gain first-hand experience, providing direct service and supporting programs in adult literacy and basic skills, GED preparation, citizenship preparation, and health services for immigrant families and adult learners. This collaborative between Rochester Public Schools and Winona State University faculty and students has a long, successful history.

Health and Human Services Experiential Learning Initiative

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University, Universidad de Concepcion (Chile), CentraCare Health System, coalition of local social services county agencies/organizations, churches, public/private schools, Latino organizations and leaders, Latino businesses

TARGET POPULATION

Health and social services graduates, undergraduate students

AREA SERVED

Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne counties

The goals are manyfold: to help students obtain multicultural knowledge and language skills by carrying out and reflecting upon Public Health services offered to underserved Latino communities at the Latino Health Fairs at no charge to participants, under the supervision of Health professionals and faculty from both countries; to fine-tune skills learned in their classrooms; to create an awareness of how health-related needs are met for Latino communities. This type of program provides the students an experience that offers additional marketable skills for future employment and professional advancement, and allows them to learn and work side-by-side with visit-

ing fellow nursing students from Chile. This program faces financial barriers for the Chilean students (travel expenses), and has been financially sponsored by annual grants.

Health Support Specialist Registered Apprenticeship Program

KEY PARTNERS

Aging Services of Minnesota, Avera Marshall/Morningside Heights Care Center, HealthForce Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), Three Links Care Center

AREA SERVED

Statewide

The Health Support Specialist Registered Apprenticeship Program is an innovative education and on-the-job learning opportunity designed to change the traditional system of compartmentalized job duties. It creates a team-based and person-directed environment where all people thrive. Employers build a Registered Apprenticeship Program that creates a blended worker model trained by faculty within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities for a new position now recognized by the Department of Labor. Individuals who complete the program receive a HSS certificate from a participating Minnesota State College and Universities College (program pending MnSCU approval) and receive a Registered Apprenticeship Health Support Specialist Certificate from the State of Minnesota Department of Labor/Division of Apprenticeship.

Health Support Specialist was developed by Aging Services of Minnesota in part using an innovation grant from HealthForce Minnesota – a Center of Excellence within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System. The Center is a collaborative partnership of educators, healthcare providers and the community, working to increase the number and expand the diversity of healthcare workers; integrate health science education practice and research; and build capacity for both education partners and the provider community to enhance care and services for all Minnesotans.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

InternBemidji

KEY PARTNERS

Bemidji State University, Northwest Technical College, Oak Hills Christian College and area business leaders

TARGET POPULATION

Area postsecondary students

AREA SERVED

Bemidji area

InternBemidji is the result of collaboration between Bemidji State University, Northwest Technical College, Oak Hills Christian College and area business leaders. The program simplifies the process for employers of finding bright, talented students for short term projects, jobs, and internships.

Invest in You

KEY PARTNERS

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions Youth Program, Ramsey County Juvenile Probation and St. Paul College

TARGET POPULATION

Ramsey County Youth who are on Juvenile Probation

AREA SERVED

Ramsey County

The Invest in You Project began four years ago as part of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative that was being undertaken by Ramsey County Juvenile Probation to develop an alternative juvenile incarceration. Juvenile Probation Offices in Ramsey County refer juvenile offenders who are considered appropriate to an orientation session provided by Ramsey County Workforce Solutions youth staff at St. Paul College. Interested and appropriate youth begin Invest in You with a one-week Critical Thinking/Customer Service class followed by a two week Work Readiness class at St. Paul College. Once youth complete the three-week curriculum they are placed at worksites throughout the community where work behavior and work skills can be taught through experiential learning. After completing the 100-hour work experience, youth are placed in unsubsidized employment and return to their high schools. Offered quarterly, each class has approximately 12-15 youth. The goals of the program are to develop a viable alternative to incarceration (i.e. work) for youth after school and to reduce recidivism. Career guidance is provided to each youth one-on-one in order to develop a 'pathway' to high school completion followed by postsecondary education or work. The innovation comes from having a 'caring adult' working with each youth to inspire and create alternatives to crime and gang affiliation. The impact has been a decrease in recidivism for youth and a

higher high school completion rate. The plan is to continue with the project in serving youth who are on juvenile probation in Ramsey county and to possibly expand a similar type of program to adults on probation in Ramsey County. The barriers are sustainable funding for the juvenile and adult projects.

Kandiyohi Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities

KEY PARTNERS

Schools districts (Willmar, Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City, New London-Spicer), Kandiyohi County businesses, Willmar Area Community Foundation, Southwest Initiative Foundation

TARGET POPULATION

High school students (grades 10-12) from the above districts

AREA SERVED

Kandiyohi County

The CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) Program enables high school students to become self-reliant, enterprising individuals who will start successful businesses and contribute to the ongoing economic development of their communities. The goals of CEO are to:

- Provide opportunities for students to be engaged, curious, and ready to learn
- Provide real-world, real-life experiences for students
- Create a learning environment that takes the lid off of learning
- Connect students with business professionals
- Transform the way young people view the world and their future
- Inspire and encourage young people to return to their communities to live, work, raise families, and start businesses.

Started by Craig Lindvahl, educator and film maker, and operated through the Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship based in Illinois, the program was brought to Minnesota by the Minnesota Initiative Foundations. The Kandiyohi CEO (KCEO) program will be the first CEO program in the state of Minnesota and is set to begin in the fall of 2014. The KCEO program is made possible through a partnership with 50 businesses in Kandiyohi County that will contribute at least \$1,000 each per year over the next three years. The Southwest Initiative Foundation partnered with the Willmar Area Community Foundation to establish this program in Kandiyohi County and provided grant funding to catalyze the start of the program.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

KCEO students will learn from local business owners what it takes to become a successful entrepreneur as they visit 50-60 businesses and have up to 70 guest speakers throughout the year. It is the goal of KCEO to help students view the Kandiyohi area as a place of opportunity and to give them the skills and confidence to help move it forward. Daily classes will be provided for 17 students from these three school districts. The classes are primarily held in the businesses of Kandiyohi County and each student will be joined with a local business mentor to work with them throughout the school year as they develop an entrepreneurial idea. The program culminates at the end of the school year with a trade show where student businesses will be highlighted. The program model is sustained by a three-year commitment of local businesses and support within the schools involved. A local Board has been formed and is working to ensure the success of KCEO. At least two other school district cohorts in Southwest Initiative Foundation's service area are working with area businesses to begin the CEO program in their schools. The program model utilized in Illinois has indicated that the programs that are the most successful are those that are driven by area businesses. This is key to its success as already evidenced in the KCEO program which has been driven by the business community and was able to find 50 businesses in Kandiyohi County that will contribute at least \$1,000 each per year over the next three years to support the program. In addition, it was a business leader who brought business and education together to make this happen. Finding a local business leader to serve in this role for the other school districts that are interested in being the local champion is a possible barrier for the CEO program to expand further.

Machinist Apprenticeship

KEY PARTNERS

Alexandria Technical and Community College, local employers, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry

TARGET POPULATION

High school graduates or GED equivalent

AREA SERVED

Statewide

Alexandria Community College's Machinist Apprenticeship curriculum is certified by NIMS through periodic testing and accredited by the Department of Labor. It is designed to transform students into skilled machinist over four years. Students are introduced to tools, materials, measuring methods, programming, equipment, and trade terms. Along with on the job training, students receive related training using machines such as computer numerical control (CNC), turning centers,

and precision grinders. Students become knowledgeable in reading blueprints, metal varieties, and cutting tools.

The four year Machinist Apprenticeship program is for anyone who is looking for a skilled profession in machining and is willing to work in the machining trade while attending school. There is 16 credits of related training that parallels 8,000 hours of on the job training.

Maverick Software Consulting

KEY PARTNERS

Minnesota State University - Mankato, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, St. Cloud State University, MnSCU institutions across the state, private higher education institutions

TARGET POPULATION

Postsecondary computer science students

AREA SERVED

Statewide

Maverick Software Consulting is a first-of-its-kind program that brings together top computer science students with corporations seeking U.S.-based software development and testing talent. This model bridges the gap between the IT industry sector demands from industry. College students have the opportunity to develop and work on real projects as through paid internship experiences while attending a college or university. Maverick provides college computer science students with real-world software development and testing experience at top companies—with a 100 percent placement rate post-graduation. Maverick operates as a staff augmentation and college recruiting service, employing students from over 70 colleges and universities across the Midwest. These students work directly with companies to learn job skills directly applicable to their prospective work places, all while earning \$12 to \$13.50 an hour. Upon completion of a two-year trial, companies are able to decide whether they wish to hire the student. Learn more at www.mavericksoftware.com.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

Minneota Agriculture Department

KEY PARTNERS

Minneota Public Schools

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (grades 7-12) and those who remain to the community

AREA SERVED

Southwest Minnesota (Workforce Service Area 6)

The goal of this program is to promote a culture of engaging students in currently relevant learning by promoting a foundation of knowledge for which students are successful in what ever direction, career, or interest may develop based upon the opportunities we present. It is a challenge to develop a sustainable program with the opportunity to serve students and provide assistance during only part of their learning cycle. The program is limited to assisting students during the summer months. Ideally the program will be available for students during the maturity and final stages of crops, livestock, and employment programs.

Minnesota Community Health Worker Certificate

KEY PARTNERS

MnSCU two year colleges, Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance, South Central College

TARGET POPULATION

Low-skill, low-income adults, individuals from communities of color, older adults and first generation students

AREA SERVED

Statewide

This is a 16-credit certificate which allows graduates to enroll under the Minnesota Healthcare Plan through the Department of Human Services as a Medicaid reimbursable enrolled provider. This curriculum is based on the concept of experiential learning, meaning students participate in class activities, role playing and community projects. It is a competency-based curriculum which means students are assessed through their ability to demonstrate their learned knowledge. Students mainly come from underserved population who tend to be a leader within their community and are first generation students. The certificate was built for two reasons: first, to help better serve underserved populations and new immigrant and refugee populations that settled in Minnesota, and second, to create a curriculum that ensures the success of that diverse population. Because of the concept of experiential learning

and competency-based assessment, retention rates are very high with this program and many students have continued in their postsecondary studies. Some of the Community Health Worker credits articulate into other healthcare pathways, determined by each individual college.

Minnesota Youth Program

KEY PARTNERS

Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Youth Councils, community-based youth service providers, local education agencies, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Office of Youth Development

TARGET POPULATION

Economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth, ages 14-21

AREA SERVED

Statewide

The Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) provides structured, well-supervised work experience, educational opportunities, and life skills training that establishes good work habits and provides specific job skills. Youth are provided an opportunity to earn a paycheck and gain work experience and work readiness skills, and their work benefits local communities through their accomplishments. They learn to apply skills and abilities learned in the classroom to real work settings. Hands-on learning improves students' grades, attendance and graduation rates. Youth can earn academic credit and/or service learning credit for participation. The program serves a high percentage of at-risk youth: 49 percent with disabilities, 43 percent on public assistance, and 20 percent system-involved youth (homeless, runaway, foster youth, and youth offenders). The program is available in all 87 counties and is currently funded by a state appropriation of \$3.5 million per year. DEED is proposing to increase the allocation to \$10 million per year to expand the summer work experience/work related component of MYP and incorporate the activities of the Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot (HECAP) project into MYP statewide during the non-summer months. If this proposal is enacted, an additional 3,000 youth could be served in summer employment and 15,000 under the HECAP component. For more information about MYP, visit: <http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youth-program.jsp>

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

New London-Spicer High School Agriculture Program

KEY PARTNERS

New London-Spicer High School, including administration, parents, teachers, students

TARGET POPULATION

High school students (grades 9-12)

AREA SERVED

New London-Spicer Independent School District 345

The agriculture program offers a great deal of exposure to welding, construction, small engines, electricity, agriscience, and agribusiness. The goal is to show students, and give them basic skills for, the many technical careers in industry and agriculture. As a public school program with limited funds, the biggest barrier the program faces is keeping up with industry equipment and training needs.

Northeast Career EdVenture

KEY PARTNERS

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, Minnesota WorkForce Centers, regional MnSCU campuses, Junior Achievement, BestPrep, local Chambers of Commerce, area employers, area school districts

TARGET POPULATION

Youth

AREA SERVED

Northeast Minnesota

The EdVenture initiative was created as a centralized infrastructure to provide career guidance services and resources to area school districts to ensure all secondary students in the region have opportunities to learn about employer and workplace expectations and develop thoughtful and effective career plans and goals.

Career EdVenture is based on a standard menu of career guidance services from which each school can select activities and resources that complement their current efforts to prepare students for the world of work. Resources are divided into two groups: those available for individual students (career assessments, college planning, resume development, job search assistance, etc.) and resources for classes or groups (including the delivery of Junior Achievement curriculum, locally-developed workshops such as Navigating Business Culture, and business panels/speakers). All activities are coordinated through Workforce Center staff assigned to a particular school. Northeast

Career EdVenture effectively bridges the gap between two critical components of developing a workforce—the public workforce development system and public education.

Nursing/Child Well-Being Experiential Learning Undergraduate Program

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University (SCSU) Nursing Department, Universidad de Concepcion Chile (UdeC) Nursing Department, Ministerio de Salud Publica Chile, Hospital Regional Concepcion

TARGET POPULATION

Undergraduate nursing students at SCSU

AREA SERVED

Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne counties

The goals of this program are manyfold: to help students obtain multicultural knowledge and language skills by carrying out and reflecting upon public health services offered to underserved communities in Concepcion, Chile under the supervision of Public Health Nursing professionals from both countries; to fine-tune skills learned in the classrooms; to create an awareness of how health related needs are met for underserved communities. This type of program provides the students an experience that could not be replicated in central Minnesota, and offers additional marketable skills for future employment and professional advancement. This program faces financial barriers for the students, and is limited to individuals who have functional knowledge of the Spanish language (a program requirement).

Owatonna High School Agriculture Education and FFA Program

KEY PARTNERS

Owatonna High School

TARGET POPULATION

High school students (grades 9-12) at Owatonna High School

AREA SERVED

Owatonna Independent School District 761

Agriculture education prepares students for successful career pathways and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agricultural, food, fiber, and natural resources systems. Students explore career and postsecondary opportunities through hands-on activities and inquiry projects and problems. Students

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

develop employability skills through practical applications. Students participating in the FFA program will apply the concepts and principles learned in the classroom with their chosen supervised agricultural experience (SAE). A SAE program is a planned practical agricultural activity which supports skill and competency development, career success and application of specific agricultural and academic skills a student has learned through classroom instruction in agricultural education. Agriculture education students in FFA with a SAE benefit the greatest because they have the classroom instruction, the hands on experience, and the leadership skills obtained through FFA. Our plans are to expand the opportunities in the classroom, FFA, and SAE opportunities. The barriers are the lack of financial support and staffing. The classroom teacher and FFA Advisor do not have an extended contract to allow for these planned expansions. Our program has one licensed Vocational Agriculture teacher, but the second staff person is not licensed. Our greatest need is an extended contract for the agriculture teachers. The additional financial support would open new opportunities for students to develop career skills, leadership skills, and personal growth.

Paid Work Experience/Internship

KEY PARTNERS

Lifetrack, businesses hiring interns and graduates, other nonprofits

TARGET POPULATION

New immigrants, individuals with criminal backgrounds, at-risk youth ages 18-21

AREA SERVED

Twin Cities metro area

The goals of this program are to provide a short term (12-18 week) paid internship opportunity for individuals to gain work experience, gain confidence, gain a positive work reference, and move to unsubsidized employment. Our goal is for participants to successfully complete their internship and obtain unsubsidized employment. The combination of hands-on work experience and classroom American Work Culture and Work Readiness skill training provided by our career counselors allows us to support individuals to reduce barriers to employment and transition them into unsubsidized employment after successfully completing the internship. Our program ebbs and flows in relation to funding available. Over the past decade, our program has served an average of between ten and 55 people annually in paid work experience opportunities.

Project Lead the Way

KEY PARTNERS

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Coalition, St. Cloud State University

TARGET POPULATION

STEM teachers and students

AREA SERVED

Statewide (for students), national (for teachers)

Project Lead The Way offers a different approach to learning and teaching. Through activity-, project-, and problem-based curriculum, PLTW gives students from kindergarten to high school a chance to apply what they know, identify problems, find unique solutions, and lead their own learning. For teachers, the engaging, rigorous professional development model provides tools to empower students and transform the classroom into a collaboration space where content comes to life. St. Cloud State University offers and coordinates professional development, college-level credit recognition, program quality initiatives, and statewide/regional support and communication for the program.

Public Health Nursing Experiential Learning Undergraduate Program

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University (SCSU) Nursing Department, Universidad de Concepcion Chile (UdeC) Nursing Department, Ministerio de Salud Publica de Chile, Hospital Regional de Concepcion, Chile

TARGET POPULATION

Undergraduate nursing students at SCSU

AREA SERVED

Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne counties

The goals of this program are manyfold: to help students obtain multicultural knowledge and language skills by carrying out and reflecting upon public health services offered to underserved communities in Concepcion, Chile under the supervision of Public Health Nursing professionals from both countries; to fine-tune skills learned in the classrooms; to create an awareness of how health related needs are met for underserved communities. This type of program provides the students an experience that could not be replicated in central Minnesota, and offers additional marketable skills for future employment and professional advancement. This program faces financial barriers for the students, and is limited to individuals

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

who have functional knowledge of the Spanish language (a program requirement).

Registered Apprenticeship

KEY PARTNERS

Employers, unions, employer associations, colleges, MN Department of Labor (DLI), MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

TARGET POPULATION

Young adults 18 and older, adults up to age 50

AREA SERVED

Statewide

Registered Apprenticeship provides an opportunity for apprentices to learn all aspects and skills of an occupation through structured on-the-job training combined with related technical instruction from a college, university, or other continuing education provider. The goal and desired outcome is for the apprentice to learn the skills and knowledge necessary to reach competency in their chosen occupation. Registered apprenticeship is innovative because it fully prepares apprentices for positions in highly skilled occupations and the capacity to earn a livable wage. Registered apprenticeship will achieve scalability through cooperative relationships with employer organizations and associations, workforce development organizations, community and technical colleges, and individual employers.

Rochester Educators In the Workplace Institute

KEY PARTNERS

Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, area employers, Rochester Community and Technical College, University of Minnesota - Rochester, Winona State University - Rochester, Rochester Public Schools, Rochester Community Schools, Zumbro Education District

TARGET POPULATION

High school students

AREA SERVED

Rochester area

The Educators In the Workplace Institute (EIWI) is a three-day, interactive workshop that provides an opportunity for area educators to gain a better understanding of their community and participate in interactive work site visits.

The mission of EIWI is to bridge business and education communities to ensure a capable workforce. Tours are provided as a structured component of EIWI to develop connections with area businesses.

The goals are for teachers to learn what job skills are needed in the Rochester area through hands-on demonstrations and interaction with employers, and for area employers to present workforce readiness issues and current employment opportunities to area teachers.

Small Business Development Center

KEY PARTNERS

Lenders, initiative foundations, chambers of commerce, local economic development organizations

TARGET POPULATION

235,000 individuals in the nine-county region

AREA SERVED

Nine counties in west central Minnesota

Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) provide no-cost consulting to small businesses or individuals seeking to start a business to ensure their success and survival. The goals of SBDCs are to grow the regional economy, increase the number of small businesses, boost job creation and retention, and assist in securing capital/equity for businesses. Innovations include catering to the small business, customizing plans/methods for them, assisting in teaching owners in making better decisions (owners always make their own decisions), and outlining risks and opportunities in the region and industry. Everything is customized for the client/small business owner. Barriers to scaling SBDCs include a lack of State funding. Federal grant funding must be matched 100 percent by the state, and Minnesota does very little to support the services. As a result, staff spend too much time fundraising instead of focusing more on small businesses.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

STEP-UP Summer Jobs Program

KEY PARTNERS

City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program, AchieveMinneapolis, Twin Cities employers, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota WorkForce Centers, Project for Pride in Living

TARGET POPULATION

Youth ages 14-21

AREA SERVED

Twin Cities Metro

The City of Minneapolis STEP-UP Program, managed by the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP), is a public-private sector partnership designed to provide low-income Minneapolis youth with a comprehensive array of employment and training services that focus on helping youth achieve life-long self-sufficiency. The STEP-UP program helps low-income Minneapolis youth learn work readiness skills, obtain a job, explore diverse career opportunities, gain vital skills, develop professional connections and prepare for college and careers.

STEP-UP works to address racial and economic disparities in employment by providing work opportunities for youth. The target audience is economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth in need of work readiness training and legitimate work experience. STEP-UP successfully serves a majority of youth from challenged neighborhoods and families of color. In 2012, 93 percent of participants were youth of color, 50 percent lived in North Minneapolis, 15 percent had a disability, 7 percent were English Language Learners, 5 percent had involvement with the juvenile justice system, 4 percent were teen parents and nearly 100 percent came from a low-income family.

funding has supported the the orchard and garden projects and local businesses have donated seed and equipment for the test plot and sweet corn. The primary staff person has a contract with her district for 60 hours, so the projects are extremely dependent upon volunteer time.

Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Programs

KEY PARTNERS

Forest Lake Area Schools, local businesses

TARGET POPULATION

Secondary students (grades 8-12)

AREA SERVED

Forest Lake

All students enrolled in the Agricultural Education program at Forest Lake Area Schools are expected to conduct a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program. Students develop their own plan of action to pursue an area of agricultural interest. These experiences may be work and/or volunteer placement, entrepreneurship, scientific research, or community improvement programs. The goals are for students to become engaged in an experiential learning activity related to agriculture and for students to develop knowledge and skills that could lead to a potential career or future area of study. The challenge is that SAE programs should continue throughout the year and be supervised by the teacher. This includes times during the school year when the student is not enrolled in class, as well as times when school is not in session (i.e. summer). This requires extra time and resources to be properly managed.

Summer Agriculture

KEY PARTNERS

IMPACT Group, Eagle Kids Club, FFA

TARGET POPULATION

Youth ages 4 to 18

AREA SERVED

Eden Valley-Watkins area

Students are engaged in a community garden, test plot, apple orchard, sweet corn plot, leadership development activities, livestock shows, and work experience. The goal for summer 2014 was to actively involve more students in our garden project by implementing fun, educational workshops. Funding will always be an issue in sustainability for these programs. Grant

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

Survive and Thrive: A Conference for Medical Humanities

KEY PARTNERS

St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Area School District 742, Rejuv Medical, St. Cloud Heart and Cardiovascular, Quiet Oaks, CentraCare

TARGET POPULATION

Cardiac arrest survivors, cardiovascular healthcare professionals, medical educators

AREA SERVED

Statewide and beyond

Survive and Thrive is dedicated to improving the odds of survival and living well through education. The conference blends medicine and the arts in sessions dedicated to learning and sharing knowledge together in support of survivors, healthcare professionals, medical educators, and educators from the fine arts and humanities. It promotes the interests and projects of medical humanities and narrative medicine. The unique approach includes both EMS and medical technology as essential elements in content planning as well as the involvement of survivors of sudden cardiac arrest, PTSD, depression, brain injury, and cancer. A content development committee of 30 professionals with local and national participation is engaged in designing panels, workshops, studios, and training sessions for all participants.

Urban Scholars

KEY PARTNERS

The City of Minneapolis, The Metropolitan Council, Greater Twin Cities United Way, PCL Construction, Minneapolis Public Schools, The James P. Shannon Leadership Institute, Toastmasters International

TARGET POPULATION

College Students – Graduate and Undergraduate

AREA SERVED

Minneapolis/St. Paul region

Urban Scholars is a leadership development internship program for college students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The program provides undergraduate and graduate students distinctive professional experiences focused on gaining essential leadership skills and creating career pathways to positions of influence in the public and private sectors. The program offers participants professional leadership and communications skills development training, a high quality resume

building work experience and opportunities to create valuable professional networks.

Urban Scholars addresses racial disparities in employment by preparing participants for good jobs post-graduation. Urban Scholars began in the City of Minneapolis in 2012 and has increased participation each year from 8 in 2012, 17 in 2013 and 36 in 2014. 84% of all Urban Scholars have been students of color and many Urban Scholars have subsequently been employed by the City following graduation. Because of the vast numbers of students of color graduate who from local public schools and go on to postsecondary education, the City of Minneapolis increased Urban Scholar partner organizations to host participants to include the Metropolitan Council, Minneapolis Public Schools, PCL Construction and Greater Twin Cities United Way in 2014. Several other agencies have expressed interest in hosting Urban Scholars in 2015.

Workforce 2020

KEY PARTNERS

West Central Initiative, Enterprise Minnesota

TARGET POPULATION

Incumbent manufacturing employees

AREA SERVED

West central Minnesota

Workforce 2020 helps address problems created by a mismatch between the skills needed by the region's manufacturers and the skills readily available in the labor force. Workforce 2020 grants are specifically targeted to bring in nationally-recognized experts to provide world-class training. The training is experiential in that by design it is typically delivered at the work site and involves both classroom instruction and on-the-floor application. The goal of the program is to assist incumbent manufacturing workers in attaining skills that enable them to earn a living wage while strengthening the region's economy by addressing long-term shortages and gaps in the availability of skilled labor to meet the needs of employers.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CONTINUED

Youth Energy Summit (YES!)

KEY PARTNERS

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Southwest Initiative Foundation, Laurentian Environmental Learning Center, Ney Nature Center, Central Minnesota Sustainability Project

TARGET POPULATION

Youth grades 7-12

AREA SERVED

Statewide, with heaviest activity in southern, central and west central Minnesota

Youth Energy Summit (YES!) empowers youth to partner with their community to create economic and environmental vitality through hands-on learning and team-based projects.

Through YES!, students are learning by doing—building solar panels, doing energy audits, designing and building compost bins and small wind turbines, growing local food for their cafeterias and more. Students are the impetus for catalytic change through their YES! projects, changing the way communities use energy, consider buying choices, adopt renewable technologies and view their youth. As one senior said after being involved for several years, “YES! doesn’t only benefit your school. You take so much away from it like public speaking and other life skills you accumulate through YES! YES! allows you to come up with, initiate, apply, and execute ideas. That’s something that will benefit you not just in YES! – YES! benefits are not just temporary!” Through YES!, students are discovering career opportunities and learning important 21st century skills such as problem solving, communication, teamwork, innovation, and project management.

Since its inception in 2007, YES! has involved 1,794 students who have worked with 1,807 local businesses, organizations and community members to impact an additional 99,637 community members and 60,627 students. Youth teams have reached amazing outcomes such as a \$45,000 energy efficiency upgrade to a community theater, reducing school electricity costs by \$5,000 per year through a lighting project, acquiring \$50,000 in technology upgrades by making an energy video that won a Samsung contest, playing a key role in building a passive solar school greenhouse, operating and maintaining school greenhouses and gardens, decreasing their school recycling contamination rates from 70 percent to five percent, recycling nearly 2,000 pounds of holiday lights annually, reducing their school’s cafeteria food waste by over 50 percent, and more.

The program is further expanding over the next two years into northeast Minnesota with funding from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) and a

partnership with Laurentian Environmental Learning Center. The program seeks to have at least 40 teams on board in the next two years. Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center is the primary administrator of the program. The program is currently undergoing an evaluation and strategic planning process guided focused on best practices for program structure, team activity, and funding sustainability.

Finding a method of sustaining the program without seeking annual grant funding is the most significant barrier for this program. The program has a proven model for engaging youth and building their 21st century skills. It has the potential to become a stronger statewide initiative through continued collaboration and funding.

For more information about YES!, visit: www.youthenergy-summit.org

Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grants

KEY PARTNERS

Various nonprofit providers, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Office of Youth Development

TARGET POPULATION

Youth that are at-risk, from communities of color, or economically disadvantaged

AREA SERVED

Statewide, where program providers are located

Competitive grants are provided via successful responses to a Request for Proposal process and are designed to support innovation in youth programming. The grants support work experience activities for youth who previously had no such experience and are designed to allow participants to gain workplace skills such as attendance, teamwork, punctuality, conflict resolution, communication, cooperation, et cetera. Additionally, grants enhance specific participant skills useful in workplaces such as community relations, teaching, and data base management. In certain grants, credentials are earned that allow recipients to offer enhanced certified skills to employers. Plans are being made to increase the number of grants by securing additional state resources.

YouthBuild

KEY PARTNERS

Ten local programs, organized labor, apprenticeship programs

TARGET POPULATION

Youth that are at-risk (especially youth of color), dropouts, juvenile offenders

AREA SERVED

Statewide in areas served by local programs

Youthbuild provides experiential learning to youth at-risk (especially youth of color, youth dropouts, and juvenile offenders) in the area of construction. Youth learn workplace skills that go beyond construction and are important in the labor market as a whole. Youth learn teamwork, punctuality, attendance, cooperation, conflict resolution, et cetera, all of which increase the employability of youth. Youth obtain portable credentials that are adaptable to other construction projects. Youth learn the meaning of work. Plans are being proposed to increase the number of sites in Minnesota to serve areas not presently covered. Plans are also being made to match the state funds with foundation aid to allow the programs to address unmet needs.

