

MINNESOTA YOUTH PROGRAM

SFY2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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WHO IS SERVED BY THE MINNESOTA YOUTH PROGRAM?

During State Fiscal Year 2021 (SFY2021), 2,684 youth were served through the work experience component of the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) and an additional 14,880 youth were served through the Outreach to Schools/Career Advisor component of MYP: 50% are youth of color, 47% are youth with disabilities and 63% are youth from families on public assistance. Customers are at-risk, low- income youth ages 14 to 24 who lack academic and “applied skills” considered critical for current and future workplace requirements. MYP meets the needs of youth who are hands-on, applied learners. MYP provides safe and healthy worksites and sets high expectations for growth and learning. Detailed information on youth served under MYP in SFY2021 and outcomes are included in charts at the end of this report.

HOW DOES MYP PREPARE YOUTH FOR THE WORKFORCE?

Comprehensive services include:

Early Assessment: Skill assessment and interest determinations individualize the service, assist in career development.

Work-Based Learning: Job opportunities in public and private sectors introduce youth to career pathways.

Mentoring: Builds workplace skills, career awareness and confidence.

Financial Literacy: Budgeting and independent living skills developed.

Leadership Skills: Opportunity to work with diverse groups and engage in community service.

Employer Engagement: Employers evaluate work readiness skills of youth in pre and post assessments on the worksite.

Support Services: Transportation, clothing, tools, childcare, housing/rental assistance, and school-related financial assistance are available to support participants in work experience.

Credentials/Academic Credit: Youth can earn academic credit, service-learning credit or industry-recognized credentials, degrees, and certificates.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY ABOUT WORK EXPERIENCE FOR TEENS?

Research has shown that the number one predictor of future success in the workforce is early exposure to work experience:

- Contextual learning improves student’s grades, attendance and graduation rates
- Young people who have an opportunity to gain work experience as teens are more likely to stay in school, avoid criminal involvement, gang behavior, drugs and unplanned pregnancies
- Teen employment contributes to significantly higher wages as young adults enter their twenties
- Teens in low-income families have the least access to jobs – especially jobs that combine part-time work and school

WHAT IS THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) FOR THE MINNESOTA YOUTH PROGRAM (MYP)?

Each state dollar invested in MYP yielded a return on investment of \$9.45 for SFY 2021. See ROI chart at the end of this report.

HOW ARE MINNESOTA YOUTH PROGRAM SERVICES PROVIDED?

In SFY 2021, services were provided by 18 grantees throughout the state, see listing of these grantees on the following pages.

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA

Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC)

Eriann Faris, Youth Program Manager

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Phone: 507-476-4053

www.swmpic.org

Counties served: Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Swift, and Yellow Medicine.

OVERVIEW

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) works to build tomorrow's workforce through partnerships with a shared focus on training and leadership. We are a private, nonprofit organization that offers customized training and employment services for individuals and businesses in a 14-county area of Southwest Minnesota. We facilitate services through three CareerForce locations in Marshall, Montevideo, and Worthington. For 35 years, the PIC has helped build a skilled and qualified workforce.

Our youth and young adult division works with employers and educators to assist students and their families with career exploration, career preparation, and skills training that align with the needs of local employers. Providing youth and young adults with opportunities to experience "real-life" workplaces and employees outside of training is important for their career preparation and for building a pipeline of future skilled workers in Southwest Minnesota. Services include career awareness and exploration activities, career preparation, career pathways training, post-secondary scholarships, transition and career advisory services, work-based learning opportunities, and support services.

PIC leverages other resources, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Minnesota Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Program (Youth at Work), Youth Intervention Funds, and local funding from foundations, partners, and counties to complement and maximize services for youth. Co-enrolling individuals allows for efficiencies with financial resources and expanded services for participants.

SERVING YOUTH UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE WORKFORCE

The Cankuya (Pathways) Program is a customized career pathway approach to invest in indigenous persons, in this instance specifically the Lower Sioux Indian Community (LSIC) youth, young adults and adults. This investment assists participants in acquiring career specific skills, mastering work readiness and connecting to long-term career opportunities in our local communities. Leaders of the LSIC identified several needs for their community. These included a lack of career skills for young adult community members who were not in school as well as deteriorating infrastructure within the Community. Leaders partnered with the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) and Minnesota West Community and Technical College to provide an opportunity for their members to gain career skills and industry recognized credentials. The Cankuya Program was developed. In partnership, the programs were designed in cooperation with LSIC to address deteriorating infrastructure. Construction projects within the community were selected to master the curriculum and support the improvement of the Community by building sheds and patios for their elders, among other projects. The LSIC has been awarded a HUD grant in which the goal is to build 10 green homes in the Community. A Carpentry Certificate program (19 college credits from Minnesota West Community and Technical College) was implemented. This project went so well, a Plumbing program will now be offered. Pioneer Public TV has prepared a video about the project. Here is a link to the video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfqm2m3Xcvi>.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) has become a limited use vendor to provide Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to eligible youth, These services assist youth in being successful in all stages of career development, including career awareness; career exploration, career preparation, and career placement, while playing a primary role in helping students and their families navigate the complex multi-agency career pathways system. Funds support a Career Advisor, whose focus is exclusively on students

with disabilities, helping them explore career options and develop plans for transition from high school to post-secondary training and/or competitive employment. The Career Advisor provides the link necessary to match students with disabilities to gainful employment through individualized needs assessment and comprehensive services such as career planning, postsecondary career education, systems linkages and service coordination, and other promising practices such as work experiences, career exploration, and work-readiness skills training.

BEST PRACTICES

As a school-to-career intermediary organization, the PIC serves as a single point of contact for employers and schools, providing a sequential, purposeful continuum of Career Exposure, Career Exploration and Career Experience. The opportunities are designed to increase knowledge of career opportunities, develop marketable experiences and skills, and build social capital across the region that leads to higher wages and lower student debt while developing an essential talent pipeline for local employers. A primary focus is on expanding Learn and Earn training models, so all students have opportunities to gain the advanced skills needed that lead to higher wages. All students (ages 14-24) in the 14-county region will have the potential to benefit with targeted services to youth of color and youth with disabilities. The impact of the project is to decrease employment disparities by advancing wages of the youth, prepare students for career decisions and employment, engage employers with local students, expand work-based learning opportunities, and develop an essential talent pipeline for employers.

Work Based Learning (WBL) Opportunities Business and youth both benefit from work-based learning (WBL) since the training is tailored specifically to the needs of business and the needs of the participants. The end result of WBL placements is increased productivity and engagement from the worker. Work-based learning supports a broader pipeline of workers by connecting businesses to a pool of underrepresented populations that may otherwise have difficulty engaging. In order to realize these benefits, business partners are engaged in the career pathway program design and curriculum development to ensure it meets their business needs. In order for youth to develop the skills necessary to be successful in a work environment, PIC Youth Staff address identified barriers by providing experiential and work-based learning opportunities for youth. Work-based Learning opportunities include work experience, on-the-job training, and internships with an emphasis on high growth, high wage career placements. Youth are matched with an employer based on identified career interests. The majority of the worksites have fewer than 10 employees. This close connection develops into quality mentoring relationships. To foster this bond, staff provides the employer with support and resources related to mentoring tips, practices, and activities.

Career Pathway Initiatives In addition to providing standard work-experience activities, PIC's Career Pathway initiatives enable youth and young adults to better understand the connection between work and success, to learn basic work habits and skills, to form a positive relationship with leaders in their communities, and to develop meaningful education and/or employment goals through mentoring provided by the employer, PIC staff, and partner staff. As part of the PIC Youth and Adult Career Pathway initiatives, an employer agrees to provide youth and young adults a job which will help the participant make the connection between training and long-term employability. Supervision includes the provision of clear expectations and feedback to the youth and regular communication with PIC staff. The employer also agrees to provide mentoring and create opportunities along the career pathway for future advancement. Through the career pathway trainings, the participants also earn industry recognized certificates such as Certified Nursing Assistant, Commercial Driver License, Welding, Plumbing, and others.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS/CAREER ADVISOR COMPONENT

Outreach to Schools (OTS) services are a partnership between the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board, (WDB) – SW MN Youth Committee and local educational agencies. OTS addresses a strategy for delivering effective career advisory and labor market information to the region's schools, students, and families. Providing career services in the region's school districts is critical. With local employers not able to expand their businesses due to a skills and labor shortage combined with small rural schools having very limited, if any, staff time dedicated to student career development. It is essential all students graduate and know their path to in-demand occupations available in southwest Minnesota. The goal of OTS is to provide services which will impact and improve the way youth view their future

opportunities. The focus is to see more individuals achieve training beyond high school in an effort to break the cycle of poverty. The definition of college for OTS purposes is “Any post high school training opportunity resulting in an earned credential ranging from a certificate to a bachelor’s degree and beyond”. OTS services are available to youth, young adults, parents, and school districts in the region. The purpose of OTS is to identify and address unmet needs while implementing a strategy for delivering effective educational planning, career counseling and labor market information. The PIC Youth Programs work in partnership with school districts to ensure all youth have access to employment and training services including education and career planning; post-secondary planning; assistance with applications; financial aid; scheduling campus visits; job search; assistance with employment applications; resume writing skills; industry tours; career fairs; career and college readiness days; Career Pathway training, and other related services.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “During my work experience I got to work with great people, learned responsibility, and made money.” – Youth participant
- “Participation in this program gave our student the opportunity to learn and practice skills that will enable them to be successful in the work environment. Understanding what employers are expecting of them is crucial to their success.” – Employer
- “Our youth worker learned many skills during the year that are essential in the work setting, such as timeliness, quality of work produced, profit margin, importance of staying on task, following directives, and the importance of communication.” – Employer
- “I learned valuable communication skills with the work experience with lots of different kinds of people who hold various positions in a nursing home setting and with residents.” – Youth participant

SUCCESS STORY

Megan was a junior at the Minnesota River Valley Education District (MRVED) Alternative Learning Center in Montevideo, MN. Megan was running into barriers with transportation to be able to get to and from work at her job as a cashier in Walmart (with a great work history of over a year). When Megan was referred to the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) she was interested in gaining her driver’s license to diminish her transportation barrier but was not able to come up with enough money to pay for the training by the registration deadline.

While Megan was working with PIC to improve her situation by gaining her driver’s license, she was informed of the Nursing Assistant Career Pathway course that was going to be held through PIC, MRVED, Adult Basic Education, and Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Megan attended the Nursing Assistant training and successfully obtained her Minnesota Nursing Assistant Certificate and driver’s license. Megan applied for a Certified Nursing Assistant position at a nursing home in her hometown right away and was hired. Megan is now working as Nursing Assistant and is able to get to and from work on her own.



SOUTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA

South Central Workforce Council/Minnesota Valley Action Council

Heather Gleason, Executive Director

706 North Victory Drive Mankato, MN 56001

Phone: (507) 345-2418

www.workforcecouncil.org

Counties Served: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan

OVERVIEW

Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) provides comprehensive services that prepare youth for the world of work including: career exploration/planning, labor market information on demand occupations, job seeking and keeping skills, financial literacy and work experience opportunities. Based on assessment results, youth are placed in worksites that fit their career interests and whenever possible at private sector sites where there is a greater opportunity for youth to get hired. Financial fitness training requires youth to open a savings account to direct deposit the paycheck and workshops teach them about money management, saving money and building assets.

South Central leveraged additional funding to complement and maximize services to target populations including youth from communities of color, youth transitioning out of the foster care system, youth with disabilities, teen parents and youth in public assistance households as well as career services to high school students. Funding sources include Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Youth At Work Competitive Grant, Youth Intervention Program Grant, TANF Youth Grant, Pre-Employment Transition Services funding through Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Rural Career Counseling Coordinator and funding from local partners to support career exploration events.

VIRTUAL SERVICES

Traditional methods of providing career exploration, career counseling and work readiness services were pivoted to virtual services during the pandemic. One example is Get Started, a virtual four-week course providing training in communication skills, budgeting, health and wellness, and community exploration, which are fundamentals in being successful in life and employment. The Get Started course is the first step on a youth's journey to become a successful employee. Youth learn about the importance of effective workplace communication, how to budget their money, the impacts of health and wellness on employment and local community resources that are available. Youth received a \$50 stipend for each week of completed assignments, earning up to \$200 over the four-week course. In addition to the topics covered, youth are learning technology skills, dependability, time management skills and building self-confidence through the Get Started course.

Skills for Success provides classroom presentations to high school students on a variety of topics including career assessments, career planning and exploration, labor market information, job search, work readiness skills, post-secondary planning, and financial literacy. This past year, the Skills for Success video series was developed and offered to local school districts featuring three videos on Skills, Interviewing and Maintaining Employment. Each video contains advice from four local employers representing the healthcare, manufacturing, construction and agriculture industries. The video series provides a virtual option for schools to engage in Skills to Success Services during distance and hybrid learning.

CAREER EVENTS

Area high school students participated in a variety of virtual career exploration events featuring demand occupations in key industries in our area. Over 1,800 students from 31 area high schools participated in the Virtual Tour of Manufacturing which offered virtual manufacturing tours, an employer panel, virtual scavenger hunt, electronic Tour of Manufacturing magazine and additional resources to educate students on the opportunities in manufacturing. About 1,300 students from 27 area high schools attended the Virtual Construct Tomorrow event to learn about construction trades and explore union apprenticeship opportunities. The virtual event offered construction and apprenticeship videos, construction trades websites, infographics, and trades contacts. The South Central Construction Trades Boot

Camp offers students an opportunity to further explore construction trades through a two week interactive camp with hands-on learning activities each day. Fifty-eight students participated in a two-day SCRUBS Camp which offered an opportunity for students to explore health science professions through hands on activities. This event was featured in a documentary titled “Ready for the Future: Career Preparation in Rural Communities” <https://www.tpt.org/ready-for-the-future/>. The documentary was a partnership between Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest at the American Institutes for Research and Twin Cities PBS.

PARTNERS IN CAREER EXPLORATION (PICE)

PICE is a partnership between workforce development and education that places interns from a local college in local rural schools’ districts to provide one-on-one career exploration and career counseling assistance to high school students.

The interns are first year graduate students in the Student Counseling Program at Minnesota State University-Mankato. Prior to placing the interns at area high schools, they received training from CareerForce location partner agencies and our local labor market analyst who provides them with information on our labor market including high growth/demand occupations in the region.

The intern meets with every high school junior and senior enabling them to reach students that are not proactive about their plans after high school and would otherwise go unnoticed and fall through the cracks. The interns also provide career exploration activities for younger grade levels so that they can begin to consider their plans after high school. This program was recognized as a best practice by the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO LABOR MARKET INFOGRAPHICS

South Central and Southwest Minnesota identified a great need to provide labor market information to students, parents, and school counselors to create awareness of career opportunities in high-growth, in-demand occupations. The launch of the labor market and social media campaign “Know Before You Go” shares infographics on education and wage range by education level, annual tuition increases, cost of a degree, and demand jobs in the region. We launched industry specific infographics for healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, agriculture, transportation, construction, business, and education. The infographics feature a variety of occupations in each industry and compare education, important qualities, job description, employment opportunities, work environment and career paths at every education level. The infographics are also available in Spanish. To complement the infographics, a monthly Career Corner newsletter is shared with schools to increase career awareness for students and their families. The newsletter focuses on labor market, career opportunities, employment tips and resources in South Central.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

- Local School Districts
- Minnesota State University-Mankato
 - Education Talent Search
 - Student Counseling Department
- South Central College
 - Financial Aid Outreach
 - Secondary Relations
- South Central Service Cooperative
- CareerForce Location Partnering Agencies
 - Job Service
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Services
 - Minnesota Valley Action Council
 - Regional Labor Market Analyst

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- I was placed on a job that suited me. My supervisor and coworkers were great to work with. Loved my job! – Youth Participant
- I enjoyed learning to work with coworkers, how to work with customers and learning new skills. – Youth Participant
- Being able to explore my future career in my hometown and seeing all of the opportunities. – Youth Participant

- The Skills for Success video is a great resource for students to see exactly what local employers are looking for! MVAC Staff is also a great resource that knows so many different aspects of interviewing and job applications. – High School Teacher
- I actually never focused on my positive skills and traits before. This really opened my eyes to those things about me that I would like others to see. – High School Student through Outreach to Schools

SUCCESS STORY

Mylette was referred by her high school social worker. She wanted a job but wasn't sure how to get one. She was shy and insecure about the job search process and wanted help with the process. Mylette is the oldest (and only girl) of 6 kids and mom is a hardworking single parent. Mylette often assists her mom in caring for her brothers who she loves dearly. Her family are migrant workers, and she travels back and forth from Texas which has made it difficult for her to make connections in one community. Mylette began the virtual "Get Started" program offered by MVAC and started to come out of her shell. MVAC placed her in a work experience at the Salvation Army Food Shelf. It was close to her home as transportation was an issue since she did not have her driver's license yet. She loved it and did an amazing job. She assisted the social worker with food distribution, stocking shelves and even interpreting for those Spanish speaking customers who struggled with understanding English. She gained friendships with many of the volunteers and was a valuable asset to the worksite. Mylette is genuine, kind, appreciative of the assistance and very mature for a 16-year-old girl. She has gained a lot of confidence and she feels especially good about her ability to assist her mom financially. Mylette will be returning to high school this fall and has her goals set on getting her driver's license and a job that fits in with her school schedule. She aspires to attend CNA training in the near future and plans to pursue nursing after high school.



CITY OF DULUTH

Duluth Workforce Development

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Phone: (218) 730-5241

Area served: City of Duluth

OVERVIEW

Duluth Workforce Development provides services to in-school and out-of-school youth through the YES Duluth program. YES Duluth serves youth and young adults who experience barriers to achieving their goals in employment and/or education through a wide array of employment and education support services. YES Duluth's program elements include career pathways assessment and education, work readiness training, soft skills training, work experience, job skills training, financial literacy training, and other program elements as appropriate to the individual.

Support and guidance for individuals working toward their GED, high school diploma, post-secondary education and short-term training is available to participants. CareerForce in Duluth partners with Adult Basic Education (ABE) to provide tutoring support to help participants with study skill development, basic skills training, and GED preparation.

YES Duluth works in close partnership with area youth providers and strengthening our referral network has proven to better reach and better serve our at-risk youth and young adults. In addition, we leverage resources through co-enrollment in grants and programs whenever necessary to best meet our participants' service needs.

BEST PRACTICES

As a best practice, YES Duluth works in close partnership with youth serving agencies throughout our community to ensure access to the program elements necessary for support in achieving individualized education and employment goals. Through the Opportunity Youth of Duluth collaboration, we leverage the strengths and resources provided through our partner agencies to make connections, provide stability, connect with resources, and pave the way for individual skill building as youth begin their career path.

YES Duluth counselors work one-on-one with youth to assist in the development of their individual employment and education plan. In the early stages of enrollment, we incorporate guidance and counseling in career planning, job seeking, confidence and self-management, handling conflict and employability skills. YES Duluth counselors are currently utilizing activities and assessments from Career EdVentures, Skills to Pay the Bills, Holland Career Interest Surveys and the CAREERwise Education resource as tools for individuals to identify personal strengths, explore possible career pathways and plan for obtaining stackable credentials in post-secondary education. We are also integrating online work readiness assessment and training programs, Conover Company and Virtual Job Shadow, into our available resources.

Using DEED data tools and CAREERwise Education statistics, YES Duluth staff maintain an "LMI Snapshot" which is distributed to youth participants. The Snapshot illustrates current and local LMI data including growing careers, jobs with the most openings in the area and LMI "fun facts." Presenting this information to youth initiates discussions and informs decision making regarding how the youth's goals and interests fit into our region's current labor market picture.

To develop our participants' skills in financial literacy, we provide a variety of training opportunities and support to youth based on the age, experience and needs of the individual youth. Financial literacy toolkits YES Duluth staff utilize include CFPB's Your Money, Your Goals toolkit and NEFE's High School Financial Planning Program. In-school youth can receive Managing Credit Education in partnership with local financial institutions. We also continue to maintain outreach and referrals with community partners that teach financial literacy, including ABE, Community Action Duluth (CAD), and Lutheran Social Services (LSS).

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Duluth Workforce Development's YES Duluth program maintains a strong referral network that effectively refers and connects youth with the program. This core network includes local youth-serving organizations such as ISD 709 Counselors, Life House, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, SOAR Career Solutions, YWCA, Valley Youth Center, Neighborhood Youth Services (NYS), and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Counselors. YES Duluth staff meet regularly with area partners to effectively refer youth to appropriate services and to communicate regarding eligibility, program elements, support services and incentives to aid in outreach.

YES Duluth staff continually diversify and engage our pool of employers that provide work experiences to our youth participants. When establishing relationships with local businesses, we strive for a balance of LMI based employer connections and person-centered employment options. To better serve our youth and our community, YES Duluth is currently working with our local workforce board's Emerging Workforce Committee to expand our employer base and to explore new options to facilitate engagement between youth and community employers.

YES Duluth utilizes Minnesota Youth Program funding to leverage and enhance services offered through WIOA Title I Youth and MFIP, among others. Youth are co-enrolled in multiple grants whenever possible.

SERVING YOUTH UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE WORKFORCE

YES Duluth staff are continually building relationships and extending into the community in partnership with area organizations to connect with youth in greatest need of support. Current connections and projects are forming with Men as Peacemakers, MN Teen Challenge, Family Freedom Center, CAD, The Human Development Center, Safe Haven Shelter and Resource Center, LSS, and ISD 709 staff.

The Opportunity Youth of Duluth is a collaboration between YES Duluth, SOAR Career Solutions, Life House, and ABE to provide the strongest possible support system to the hardest-to-serve youth. This initiative gives under-served and under-represented youth an opportunity to fulfill areas of need including housing, employment and education, mental health services and chemical dependency treatment.

There are multiple planned events throughout the year where YES Duluth collaborates with partners to engage a diverse group of young people, including youth of color and those with disabilities. Events include Construct Tomorrow, Northland Career Fair, Pathways to Careers, NERCC Transition Fair, and mock interview events with ISD 709, leading individuals to success in obtaining scholarships and employment.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

YES Duluth staff are embedded at the Career Centers located at the East and Denfeld High Schools, and at Harbor City International Charter. One key priority of this effort is to engage with and serve minority populations and students with disabilities. To reach more students of color and augment partnership with the Career Centers, YES Duluth staff are strengthening relationships with school integration specialists, truancy action program staff, Check and Connect staff and the Special Education departments. Activities complement the work of school guidance counselors and part-time career center staff and provide greater opportunities for students to:

- Identify and explore areas of career interest;
- Gain exposure to different occupations through tours and other opportunities;
- Gain work experience and internship opportunities that help prepare students for future work;
- Receive individualized assistance with development of a plan that puts them on track for success in work and life.

Embedded job counselors work to engage with in-school youth as they move into out-of-school status. At that juncture we strive to engage youth in education, employment and other program elements before they disconnect from the school system.

YES Duluth has collaborated with the Denfeld Full Service Community School to serve more students and families at a deeper level. YES Duluth is able to engage families in conversations about scholarships, financial aid, post-secondary training, and overall services offered through CareerForce and the community at large.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “I loved the program and will refer others.” – Youth participant
- “Great place. Great people.” – Youth Participant
- “I’m super glad to be back working with our youth participant and YES Duluth! Thanks!” – Worksite Supervisor

SUCCESS STORY

Shaun was referred to YES Duluth by our community partner, Life House, in February 2020 for assistance with GED completion and future career exploration. Shaun started working on his GED studies with Life House and quickly started passing his tests. In the spring, Shaun took part in Freedom Youth Startups, an entrepreneurial and work readiness training cohort for young adults. Shaun developed a business model, shared his model with the public during a Freedom Youth Startups Showcase, and earned his GED this summer! Shaun is now gaining leadership skills while completing a work experience and will be continuing with additional training.

NORTHEAST MINNESOTA

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (NEMOJT)

Marie Domiano, Executive Director

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P.O. Box 1028, Virginia, MN 55792

Phone: (218) 748-2200

nemojt.org

Area served: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis (except City of Duluth)

OVERVIEW

Northeast Career EdVenture is the Outreach to Schools (OTS) service to provide free career planning and guidance services to local school districts using the expertise that resides in the local CareerForce system and the partnerships our system has developed over the years. Some districts have robust career planning resources to guide students and many, if not most, have very little to offer students for career planning. Career EdVenture offers a standardized menu of services from which any school district in our region can select resources needed for their students. With the advent of COVID-19, WDA-3/Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (NEMOJT) has adapted quickly and efficiently to accommodate new learning environments and challenges.

Services are divided into two categories: services for individuals (one-on-one career guidance, career assessment, postsecondary planning, resume development, personalized job search strategy, and transitioning from high school) and services for groups/classes (Navigating Business Culture, Financial Literacy, business and industry speakers and tours, postsecondary planning, career interest and values assessments, and games and activities with career exploration themes, and more).

Coordinating MYP OTS, WIOA Youth programming and VRS Pre-ETS is a comprehensive effort by NEMOJT to reach all students in a school district often with blended activities from various resources, when appropriate with those from such Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) Pre-employment and Training (Pre-ETS) programming. An integration of service delivery allows NEMOJT staff to be able to serve virtually any students and parents in a school district regardless of their needs and abilities. The coordination of services across the broad spectrum of a student population as an OTS activity builds enrollment for established WIOA & MYP programming while providing similar Career EdVenture OTS information at a pace structure that is mindful of accommodating all student's needs.

All services are geared to help students understand the opportunities available to them in the world of work. For example, our postsecondary planning workshop addresses how to identify programs that lead to jobs in high demand careers using various research approaches that include labor market information on high-demand, high-pay jobs, and career pathways. When asked to provide business and industry speakers for classrooms, representatives from high demand industries are sought to provide insight into career opportunities from a local perspective. Financial literacy workshops are offered in partnership with the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency by referral to our youth CareerForce sites and as a component of Career EdVenture curriculum. Over time NEMOJT has determined that not only is financial planning necessary to understand what constitutes a living wage and viable future career, it can set into motion a process of financial planning for post-secondary to minimize or eliminate student debt.

We have developed numerous resources that help students identify and explore high growth industries and in-demand occupations, including a 2-part Career Exploration series that covers making the connection between assessment results and labor market information, discusses what is really a livable wage, what success in the 'new economy' looks like, and how to explore corresponding training programs. Additionally, we have created several worksheets to engage students in understanding high-demand, high-wage occupations. Beyond providing just career resources NEMOJT staff teach self-advocacy skills helping youth to gain a voice to speak up for themselves, aid in their decision-making process, understanding their rights and identifying how and where to go to get and receive help.

NEMOJT youth counselors market this menu to school personnel who then select the services best suited to their student population. The Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) is a tool used to assess the effectiveness of our youth programming. Adding to NEMOJT counselor expertise and expanding the awareness of Career EdVenture/MYP OTS, CareerForce partners convened a joint professional development day to inform partners of service and to provide additional training with the theme of “Why Diversity Matters.” Ongoing work individualized work for addressing disparities and diversity is being done by NEMOJT counselors from the Intercultural Development Inventory to help them to better engage the changing demographics of northeast Minnesota

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

NEMOJT counselors continue to have an on-campus presence at most regional technical and community colleges. NEMOJT staff can be found at Fon-du-Lac TCC, Mesabi Range TCC, Rainy River Community College, Hibbing Technical College, Lake Superior College, and Itasca Community College. Local high school students gain the benefits of NEMOJT staff housed on local campuses to provide a bridge from secondary to post-secondary education with the most up to date information on careers, programming, and access to resources. Aligning services with DWP/MFIP participants, also an area of NEMOJT programming is providing opportunities to engage those most in need. A multi-disciplinary approach to youth services that has brought staff from other community-based organizations to the CareerForce sites and provided recruitment opportunities and services to youth.

Career EdVenture included several events that engaged larger groups throughout northeast Minnesota. The overarching goal is to inform about careers in high demand and high pay careers, especially in the crafts and trades. The region has a projected shortfall of workers entering the trades and a high demand due to numerous regional construction projects expected to occur well into the next decade. On a larger scale NEMOJT is integral part in the delivery of 218-Trades information designed to assist students and parents to career in the crafts and trades. The Iron Range Construct Tomorrow is an ongoing event in Eveleth, MN. Construct Tomorrow is a hands-on event for high school students to introduce them to the skilled trades in tandem with the NEMOJT regional initiative 218-Trades. More than 300 students from regional high schools attended the Apprenticeships Fair. Participants included 14 different trade unions along with technical schools from the region. Chart Your Future in Carlton County, MN brought more than a dozen regional business to the meet with students and provide mock interviews to most of the graduating seniors from the Carlton High School. A Disability Mentor Day was convened for students at Fon-du-Lac Tribal and Community College as an ongoing annual event. Career EdVenture activities across the region involve field trips to the local CareerForce locations as well as resources, especially during COVID-19 to engage the internet offerings on CareerForceMN.com. Both activities provide an overview for high school students of partners and services available to them for their entire time in the workforce. A Minnesotaworks.net and CareerForceMN.com training and registration activity was built into youth activities.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “I would say the most impressive skill Chris has now acquired is his confidence. He believes he belongs in the helping field. He has seen and felt firsthand the reward of being a positive source for people who desperately need it. He is grateful for the opportunity and to figure out how he fits in our society as a young adult.” - Youth Counselor

SUCCESS STORY



Tyler was enrolled into the youth program with the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training. The counselor at the Carlton High School referred Tyler into our program knowing he needs work in the science/engineering area because of his interests and aptitude. Last summer Tyler was placed with Carlton Water and Soil mapping out culvert systems in the county. This summer he was placed at the Cloquet Forestry Center. Kyle Gill, Forest Manager, was happy to take Tyler on Board. His duties have evolved from plot maintenance and data collection to improving the Arboretum and working with Bio-Char. Tyler’s testimony included

“Clare helped me find internships in fields that interest me. The Office of Job Training has helped me build experience.” Tyler’s future is bright as he is accepted into the University of Minnesota, Duluth/ Swenson College of Science and Engineering.

STEARNS-BENTON COUNTIES

Career Solutions (Formerly Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council (SBETC))

Tammy Biery, Director

1542 Northway Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303

Phone: (320) 308-5702

www.Mn.gov/deed/stcloud

Area served: Benton and Stearns

OVERVIEW

Career Solutions offers CareerONE, a summer youth employability skills training opportunity utilizing Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) funding. CareerONE provides training in employability skills to include team building and SCANSkill activities, safety training, financial literacy, community work projects, resume writing, job application preparation, interviewing practice, and career exploration.

BEST PRACTICES

CareerONE is a unique, contextual learning experience which has demonstrated success since 2000. Each year, Career Solutions seeks to improve on the model and continue to deliver an elite opportunity for youth. During the summer of 2021, CareerONE had an 89% completion rate. Of those who completed, 98% received employability skills and 100% received safety certificates.

Youth participate in teams of 8-10 led by an adult team leader and a youth assistant leader. The youth assistant leader is a previous CareerONE graduate. The youth leader prepares and delivers the SCANSkill activities to their assigned team and assists the team leader with lesson preparations.

Components of CareerONE consist of career exploration; team building at YMCA such as wall climbing; MoneySmart FDIC curriculum; SCANSkill activities; Youth@Work Talking Safety curriculum; community service projects; employability skills training; reflection and journaling. CareerONE is 20 days in length and operates during June and July.

The Money Smart curriculum is aligned with Minnesota State Standards; applying credit to the youth's transcript is possible. The youth participate in the KeyTrain assessment and use the online KeyTrain curriculum to help increase their math and reading skills. Youth work toward demonstrating skills in: attendance, punctuality, and dress code; teamwork, cooperation, and safety; work quality and work quantity. Area organizations provide work projects which are completed by the teams.

The youth receive a portfolio containing the certificates they have earned. The certificates that may be obtained include Career Solutions Employability Skills Certificate by demonstrating competencies in: Attendance; Punctuality and Dress Code; Safety; Cooperation and Teamwork; Work Quality and Work Quantity. Other certificates that can be earned include: a Career Solutions Safety Certificate by demonstrating the ability to be 100% safe and injury free; A Youth at Work Talking Safety Certificate of Completion; a FDIC Money Smart Certificate of Completion. Other portfolio items include a resume, master application and career plan.

For the fourth year we held the HealthCare Track where students could obtain three college credits by taking a CPR/First Aid Class and course #1 of the Health Care Core Curriculum class. For the third year we the Manufacturing and Construction Track where students learned about masonry, 3D printing, and workplace safety. The construction and Manufacturing Students earned their Osha 10 and two college credits. This was the second year of the Business Tech Track that focused intro to business and Excel training. Students got the opportunity of creating their own business plan and learning about running your own business. Students received two college credits for completing the Intro to Business course, and one college credit for the Excel training.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

CentraCare, United Way of Central Minnesota, and other local sponsors partner with CareerONE providing additional funding and work-based learning projects. The CentraCare staff and CEO also participated in career information sessions

teaching participants about professions in the health care system. CentraCare employees also provided mock interviews for our students through their virtual interviewing program that they use called “HireVue”.

Career Solutions collaborates with area county human services, school districts, juvenile corrections and youth serving agencies in the recruitment of youth and families for CareerONE. Work projects are coordinated with area non-profit organizations to give students work experiences to add to their resumes. A local university and a local bus company assist in the delivery of classrooms, computer labs, transportation, etc. This year we partnered with The Yes Network to provide meals to students daily.

STRATEGY FOR SERVING YOUTH OF COLOR

In the summer of 2021, CareerONE’s population consisted of 65% youth of color. The greater St. Cloud area is a diverse mix of youth of color. Because of this diversity, Career Solutions’ partnerships with local schools and youth serving agencies ensures that youth of color are being served. Career Solutions attempts to ensure an equal representation of each ethnicity, age, gender, geography, ability to benefit, etc. This allows us to develop teams that expose youth to a variety of experiences and challenge their comfort zone. Applications are processed in order of receipt and due to the high demand for this service we consistently have a waiting list.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

From 7/1/2020-6/30/21, Career Solutions OTS provided 500 students with a positive career planning experience. We were able to assist local school districts with virtual interview and career planning classes. In addition, we were able to assist the LaCruz community youth with several school and job search related needs. The school districts are appreciative of the assistance provided to the students with their career planning needs, which assures compliance with the World’s Best Workforce legislation requirements.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “I learned many things here and how to stay safe at a work site or while working. I also learned how to stay focused or at least be prepared for what you’re going for. I learned many types of skills here in CareerOne and some are using time wisely and even practiced an interview for the future.” – Youth Participant
- “One of the best parts about CareerOne were the team building skills we accomplished as a team and how easy it is to get along with others and communicate. This was far by the best experiences I had.” Student, St. Cloud Area CareerONE
- “What I learned here at CareerOne is going to push me forward in life and give me the confidence I need to live a successful life after high school.” Student, St. Cloud Area CareerONE

SUCCESS STORY



Safi’s experience at CareerONE was one of the best experiences she has had at any program. Here’s what she shared:

“I’ve learned many things from this program, and had fun, but I’ve also learned some skills like, employability skills, attendance, participation and teamwork. Teamwork is very important when you’re working with a team and having communication skills with your team is important.

“The one thing I was very interested in was MoneySmart. MoneySmart taught me the differences between a debit card and a credit card and how finances and loans will help you a lot with college. Having grants is one of many ways to pay for college. MoneySmart actually made me think about my future and what I want to do when I graduate from high school. Having my team leader tell me that college isn’t that bad, and that I won’t regret it encourages me to go to college and wanting to do better and taking my opportunities that are open to me.

“Having respect for yourself and others at work throughout the day and having a positive mindset will build you up as a person. Integrity was one of many things I learned at CareerONE and while team building at the YMCA. Integrity is about telling the truth even when no one is looking and finishing something until you’re done. I also learned about workplace hazards and to keep on the lookout for anything out of the ordinary and being careful with my surroundings. Learning about being on time and dress code and following the rules makes you look responsible and that you’re serious about your job. The things I’ve learned at CareerONE will definitely be used every day at any future job of mine.

“I had fun at CareerONE. I’m glad that they gave me an opportunity to join this program. Working for CareerONE was an eye-opener for me because it made me rethink everything about my options. Before I started CareerONE, I wasn’t even thinking about going to college. College didn’t even cross my mind. Before, I would tell my family and friends that I was not going to college. Now I’m getting ready for college and preparing myself after graduation. I will use my CareerONE skills to be ready for my future.”

CENTRAL MINNESOTA

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc.

Barbara Chaffee, CEO

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Monticello, MN 55362

Phone: (763) 271-3700

www.cmjts.org

Area served: Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, and Wright

OVERVIEW

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS) is a private, non-profit organization that provides leadership in building a skilled workforce—workers who can do the jobs of today and learn the jobs of tomorrow. Through career counseling, job training, and strong business relationships, CMJTS helps prepare young adults for career pathways and the world of work that leads to meaningful employment. With 13 offices across mostly rural areas, our goal is to assist youth to overcome barriers to employment and economic disparities. Through an individualized approach, these services include work-based learning opportunities, career exploration and job search assistance/guidance, and provision of labor market information, including information on high-opportunity careers, career success skills development activities, financial literacy training, dropout recovery services, occupational skills training, and entrepreneur development.

BEST PRACTICES

Leadership Development

Helping our area youth develop into leaders is critical to the future of Central Minnesota's workforce and communities. CMJTS provides leadership opportunities to youth through its LEAD (Learn, Empower, Achieve, Discover) program. Youth gain leadership skills utilizing a developed curriculum, which touches upon the development of group rules/culture, self-awareness, leadership, community service, goal setting, taking initiative, time management, coping skills, conflict resolution, and constructive feedback. During this program youth also take part in a group-identified, service-learning project, to give back within their communities and inspire others.

Serving Youth with disabilities

CMJTS has years of experience working with youth with disabilities. In 2021, 57% of participants served identified as having a disability. Recruiting is accomplished through targeted outreach to partner organizations that work directly with this population. Serving youth with disabilities and helping them become successful is essential to CMJTS's mission.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

In partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), CMJTS has become a limited use vendor (LUV) to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to youth with disabilities, ages 14-21, who are potentially eligible for VRS services. This partnership provides an opportunity for youth to explore career and training options, gain work skills, and learn how to be successful after high school, including post-secondary education and/or competitive employment.

Services provided are one-on-one or through large group activities, centered on job search/exploration, post-secondary education counseling, work-based learning, budgeting, work-readiness training, self-advocacy instruction, and community learning projects.

Integrated Service Delivery

Through the participation of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), CMJTS continues to provide services to youth with disabilities. These services focus on these key approaches: implementing the Guidepost to Success, incorporating Integrated Resource Teams, and increasing services to Ticket to Work beneficiaries. In addition, CMJTS recognizes the challenge youth face when understanding their social security disability benefits, therefore, CMJTS has three certified

work incentive counselors to assist youth in transition in navigating the impact employment will have on their social security benefits.

Serving Youth of Color

The Colorful Tomorrow and Youth at Work projects funded by the Youth at Work Competitive and Support Service grants target services to youth from communities of color to reduce employment disparities. These projects focus on employment preparation and job skills, training opportunities, and provide paid internships/work experiences and other work-based learning opportunities, including the opportunity to explore entrepreneurship, develop career pathways, financial literacy training, and help homeless youth develop independent living skills necessary to increase self-reliance and stability.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

CMJTS is currently partnering with more than 60 organizations and/or schools throughout its 11-county region to provide career counseling services to youth and their families. Schools and/or youth are provided with a list of available opportunities to meet their specific needs in areas such as labor market information, industries in demand, planning for post-secondary school/employment, career exploration and assessments, scheduled tours of CareerForce centers, colleges, and businesses, connections to community resources, and career success skills preparation.

In addition, staff are connected to the local Perkins Consortium and other local agencies/businesses to partner regularly on in-demand career pathways activities, including Construct Tomorrow, IGNITE, SCRUBS camps, and participation in EPIC. These career exploration events provide high school students with hands-on, interactive activities to better understand what it is like to do work associated with their career fields of interest. This past year, CMJTS served **1,645** youth and families through OTS efforts.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Partnerships play a key role in the success of CMJTS' MYP program. In SFY 2021, these partners included local secondary schools and colleges, county human/social service and public health agencies, court services/probation offices, private businesses, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), CareerForce partners, Adult Basic Education, and community action agencies and other community-based organizations.

CMJTS leverages MYP funds through co-enrollments with the Youth at Work Opportunity Grant Program, TANF Youth Innovation Project, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Youthbuild, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), Support Service Grant, and other competitive grants to deliver effective wraparound services and to provide youth with additional opportunities for career advancement.

COMMENTS

"The Youth Employment & Training Services has been very important and helpful to me. Melanie Schroeder, my Youth employment specialist, made the experience happen by getting the company on board, doing all the paperwork, and getting me my safety shoes. The program allowed me to gain experience working in a warehouse in a manufacturing environment and it turned into a part-time job offer!" – Kalley, youth participant

"The MYP program helped me get my CNA certificate and helped me with gas to get to the classes. Now I will start my career and don't have to work in fast food anymore." – Youth participant

"If it wasn't for the MYP program I wouldn't have been able to afford to get a CNA certificate. I had a job offer already but needed to get that first. Now I am working and making \$15.52 an hour." – Youth participant

"Since working with Mel in the CMJTS Youth Program I have been able to graduate from high school, complete my CNA certification, and register for the fall semester at college." – Duncan, youth participant

"I'm always taken back when I hear your staff talk about the services they provide to youth—its important work. Know that you're making a difference in youth's lives and shaping our communities' futures." – Employer

SUCCESS STORY



Hi! My name is Maria. I come from a small town called Willmar in Minnesota. I am currently enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Anoka Technical College. This fall semester I will be finishing up the second year of my degree and will hopefully be graduating in the spring! After I graduate, I wish to pursue my degree by specializing in an area of occupational therapy such as mental health or geriatrics.

I would have not been able to go this far with my education if it wasn't for CMJTS. As a first-generation college student, it was hard for me to know where to find resources for school or how to fill out certain documents like the FAFSA. Sadly, these were all things that I was not able to ask my parents

or siblings because I was the first one in my family of five to go to college.

Thankfully, one of my cousins had heard of CMJTS and referred me to them. Since then, all I can say is thank you for all the help CMJTS has given to me. Especially Delina Woltjer, my Youth employment specialist, who has helped me out since day one. I am forever grateful for everything you have helped me with and continue to help me with. Not only have your resources and advice influenced my life, but they have also changed the course of my family's life. Now I will be able to help them with those difficult documents and refer them to resources like CMJTS. I cannot wait for them to one day be able to share their success as well! Maria is currently working as a traveling CNA at GrapeTree Medical Staffing making \$20.00 per hour.

ANOKA COUNTY

Anoka County Job Training Center

Nicole Swanson, Director

1201 89th Ave NE – Suite 235

Blaine, MN 55434

Phone: (763) 324-2300

www.anokacounty.us/JTC

Area served: Anoka County

OVERVIEW

Anoka County Job Training Center's Empowers program, provides year-round services to eligible youth in Anoka County ages 14-24, utilizing funds through both the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP). Young adults served include those from economically-disadvantaged families and/or public assistance recipients, are not in school, experiencing homelessness, aging out of foster care, high school dropouts, and unemployed and underemployed young people without postsecondary training. A variety of career services are provided including assessments and goal setting, assistance with completing high school and/or obtaining an in-demand industry recognized credential, vocational counseling, postsecondary planning, work experience/internships, financial literacy, job search and/or job placement assistance.

Many of the youth in our Empowers program are co-enrolled leveraging MYP funding. Through the braiding of funding, youth enrolled in MYP may be served through other funding such as Youth at Work, federal financial aid resources, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and Pathways to Prosperity to assist in paying for things such as credentialed training after high school completion and local Anoka County Community Action Funds to assist with support services such as transportation.

BEST PRACTICES

Empowers has adjusted to virtual service delivery models during the pandemic and sought opportunities to stay in step with virtual outreach, Earn & Learn Options, and safe worksites for work experiences. We continue to promote career pathways and digital literacy through a well-rounded network of providers and partnerships, for example:

- **Getting Connected Virtually:** An online inquiry system was deployed giving interested youth the chance to connect with our counseling team (dubbed the Admissions or A Team) to learn more about how to book an appointment for an individual basic career service or be used to provide information on programs or other community resource referrals.
- **Safe and Meaningful Work Experiences:** Youth work with their employment counselors to identify interests and possible work sites that allow the youth to build skills, manage transportation issues and other responsibilities such as schoolwork. The Empowers team uses their network to make connections to assist youth in meeting their goals. We took extra care to ensure safe sites and followed the guidance of the County and the worksites for a safe return to in-person work experiences.
- **Financial Education:** Youth are often new to financial matters when starting a paid work experience. Our team has created tip sheets and organized them by topic on our website. In the past, we sent the information via email, but emails can get lost or deleted. This resource can be used by new, existing, and past participants. We also promoted this content under our Earn & Learn Program for virtual learning.
- **Internships:** Youth with some work experience and a well-defined pathway are offered an internship. The internships are hosted by a variety of local employers and align with a specific pathway. The internships are typically three months in length, offer a higher wage and boost their skill sets and exposure to more aspects of the pathway or overall business model.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS/CAREER ADVISOR COMPONENT

Empowers allocates a percentage of MYP funds to provide Outreach to Schools (OTS). The activities complement the work of existing school counselors and provide young people career exploration and career guidance, college information and current labor market information with an emphasis on high-demand occupations. Examples of OTS activities include:

- Facilitating virtual or in person workshops at schools covering topics including planning for post-secondary training, accessing financial aid, selecting an appropriate program, goal setting and navigating business culture.
- Providing opportunities to interact with local business through virtual or in person tours, business and industry speaker panels, job shadowing, and mentoring. This past year we partnered with SLP schools and the area chamber to host a career exploration event with local businesses sharing information about their industry.
- Facilitating weekly On-Site and/or Virtual Hiring Events for our local employers and an industry specific panel including: Health Care, Trades, and the Annual Apprenticeship Summit.
- Providing information on services provided by CareerForce in Blaine and partners in our one stop location.
- Offering of virtual hours at Hope4Youth (Drop-in Center for youth experiencing homelessness) and weekly virtual services and meetings with staff at Hope Place – a transitional housing facility for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Group and individual counseling, including instruction and presentations of DEED Data Tools that provide labor market information and education opportunities of high growth and in-demand occupations.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

The current partnership network includes Anoka County Economic Assistance and Social Services Departments, the YMCA, Perkins-Oakland Consortium, local high schools and educational learning centers, Hope4Youth (the local youth homeless drop-in center) and Hope Place (transitional housing for homeless youth), Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE), the Minnesota Family Investment and Diversionary Work Programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Anoka Technical College (ATC), Anoka Ramsey Community College (ARCC), Job Corps and VRS.

Additionally, Empowers staff maintain regular communication with representatives from the Anoka County Social Services Department's Foster Care Unit, Juvenile Corrections, Stepping Stone Emergency Shelter, local secondary schools in an ongoing effort to recruit young people for the program. Staff also work closely with the CareerForce on-site TRIO Student Support Services/Academic Advisor. The Standing Youth Committee has members from many of these agencies to ensure strong communications and linkages are maintained to serve young adults.

SERVING YOUTH OF COLOR

- There are many ongoing and targeted efforts to connect with Youth from communities of color and youth with disabilities such as:
- Outreach to teen parents and youth of color in more high schools, alternative schools and community partners that predominately serve youth of color. This includes partnerships with the YMCA, Hope4Youth and the Anoka-Hennepin Teen Parent program and Job Corp.
- Partnering with Minneapolis Urban League (MUL) to provide access to a counselor/advocate that specializes in culturally specific services to African American and/or Native American individuals receiving MFIP.
- Partnering with the Future Leaders Program through Anoka-Hennepin District 11 which offers young people representing diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the opportunity to tutor in elementary schools and after school programming. The Future Leaders receive training in leadership to assist them in working through issues that are identified by the youth in the program.
- Partnering with our Metro North Adult Basic Education Providers that has additional locations in more urban settings has helped us expand our outreach to communities of color. Of the 187 youth that were served through MYP during the last program year, 50% were youth of color.

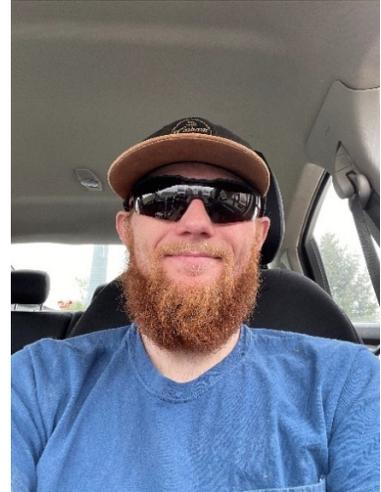
- Partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation Services through our Pre-ETS programing has increased our overall outreach to young people with disabilities. This program year, of the 187 youth served in MYP, 55% of them had a disability.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “The staff provided me the help I needed to get ahead in life. Since enrolled, I accomplished my AAS degree, bought a car and a house and got a job in my field of study. My overall experience with Anoka County was excellent.” – Jeffrey, youth participant
- “My caseworker was most helpful! Since enrolled, I got a full-time job!” – Sabrie, youth participant
- “Everything was helpful. I received good feedback on stuff and knowing who I am as a person since I was enrolled.” – Elise, youth participant

SUCCESS STORY

Andrew was referred to the Anoka County Empowers Program through a manager in a different division of Anoka County. Andrew was really interested in getting a paid internship within the HVAC industry. Since the program didn't have any businesses that specifically worked in the HVAC industry, Andrew took it upon himself to reach out to a local business to see if they would be open to taking him on as an intern. Andrew impressed the owner of the company so much that when the counselor called the owner the owner was on board to partner with Anoka County to provide an HVAC Technician Internship to Andrew. Andrew worked through the internship program for about four months learning while on the job. After four months, the owner felt Andrew had a good base of knowledge and he hired Andrew on as a fulltime employee. Andrew plans to enroll in an HVAC training in the near future to have the certification as well as all the on-the-job training he gained during his internship.



CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

Minneapolis Employment and Training

Deb Bahr-Helgen, Director

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www.minneapolismn.gov

Area served: City of Minneapolis

OVERVIEW

Step Up prepares today's youth for tomorrow's careers by recruiting, preparing, and placing nearly 1,400 young people (ages 14-21) in paid work and training experience with over 200 regional employers from small businesses and Fortune 500 companies, to public agencies and nonprofits. As one of the nation's leading youth employment programs, Step Up leverages a collective of 200 partners spanning 15 industries and multiple sectors. It's a backbone of support that unites businesses, schools, community-based organizations, and the city together in a common goal: to build and strengthen our future economy and the talented youth who will power it.

Step Up supports historically underrepresented youth in Minneapolis who are ready to navigate the professional world. The program helps organizations diversify their workforce and build a base of young skilled workers for the entire region. Step Up has provided over 29,000 internships since 2003, building a competitive talent pipeline and supporting a stronger economy.

Building a highly skilled and diverse workforce starts with programs like Step Up supporting young people with access to quality education, training, and work experiences. Step Up serves a diverse population: 89% of Step Up interns are people of color and 46% come from immigrant families who bring a wealth of language and cultural diversity to the workforce and community.

BEST PRACTICES

Work Readiness All Step Up interns complete work readiness training in the spring which prepares them to have a successful work experience in a professional setting. The COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges and opportunities for training our young people in 2021. Building from the 2020 experience of providing a hybrid of remote and in-person training, 2021 shifted to a fully online training model using the BrightSpace platform with curriculum developed and adapted to be engaging and yet allow for students to train safely. Over 2,400 youth were invited to training, and 1,390 successfully completed, a similar percentage to previous years' programming. The ability for youth to train from their home was, in some cases, a more convenient option than for them to have to find transportation to get to a community training location.

Career Pathways Exposure and Industry Specific Trainings Step Up works to provide interested interns with industry specific exposure to career options, trainings, and internships in a variety of fields, including: STEM, Health Care, Financial and Legal, and Outdoor Careers.

Career Exploration Program The Online Career Exploration Program (CEP) is a five-week program created in response to the Covid-19 pandemic as an alternative paid opportunity for participants not matched with a traditional internship experience. CEP allowed youth to explore career options in a virtual way, gain skills, and earn academic credit. Participants could earn up to \$600 for completion of the program. This summer was the second year in operation and was launched on a different online platform called BrightSpace. Out of the 995 participants invited, 689 youth participated, with 631 participants earning a stipend. Out of those young people, 547 completed all 5 weeks and earned the full stipend.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Step Up is a collective of partners—a backbone of support that joins the City, nonprofits, businesses, corporations, schools and students and their families together in a common goal: to prepare today's youth for tomorrow's careers and

build a strong regional economy. Directed by the City of Minneapolis, Step Up wouldn't be possible without the support of several important community partners. AchieveMpls, Project for Pride in Living and CareerForce Minneapolis all partner and support the work of Step Up.

SERVING UNDERREPRESENTED YOUTH

Step Up extensively recruits youth in all the large high schools in Minneapolis. Our team also recruits in several charter and alternative schools in order to reach more underrepresented youth. Additionally, our staff does robust outreach to community-based partners and parks to share resources to help youth apply to our program.

FEEDBACK FROM EMPLOYERS AND INTERNS

Feedback from employers and supervisors is essential to Step Up as we continue to innovate and improve the program to better serve our youth and community. This year, even with the challenges of many internships being remote or hybrid, 85% of supervisors still reported that their Step Up intern made a valuable contribution to their workplace, and 83% said the intern referred to their company was a good match for the position.

In addition to satisfaction with the program and the matches made at their businesses, supervisors were asked about what they most enjoyed about their participation with Step Up. Most supervisors said being able to witness and influence the growth and development of their intern through the experience was most valuable.

- 93% of Step Up Interns agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "My summer job was a valuable learning experience."
- 91% of Step Up Interns agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I feel like I made a valuable contribution to the organization I worked for."

Supervisor comments:

- "It was a joy getting to know our intern and seeing him grow in role and hone his skills!"
- "I enjoyed making a difference in Najma's life and setting her up for future success!"
- "Being able to help a young person realize their potential and love watching them grow throughout the internship."
- "Hopefully was able to share some insights into the world of work and make my intern understand some tools she needs to develop to be successful in work and college."

Intern comments:

- "It gave me experience for the career I want to pursue."
- "It taught me patience. It also helped figure out that teaching isn't in my future."
- "I learned more about Architecture as a whole and about other jobs in the architect field."
- "I got money, I had something to do, I met new people, and learned about working in a school."

SUCCESS STORY



Noel interned with the City of Minneapolis through the [Step Up Youth Program](#). She interned as a Communications Assistant, where she designed a poster through Adobe InDesign, produced her own newsletter edition, assisted with planning logistics for a video, and learned more about local government. Even at 16-years-young, Noel is set on her dream career of zoology/veterinary work. Although her summer internship did not have a daily dose of animal cuddles and veterinary tasks, she was able to develop and strengthen many other important skills, such as communication, organization, and collaboration that she can carry into other jobs and life skills. She was also able to tour the City's Animal Care & Control center during her internship, which allowed her to see the various opportunities there are for caring and working with animals. Lastly, the great thing about the Step Up summer internship was the energy and creativity Noel brought to work, allowing her Supervisor, Kelly to learn and grow from the experience as well.

HENNEPIN COUNTY

Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Area

Anne Kilzer, Director

Hennepin County A-400 Government Center

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Phone: 612-558-6399

www.hennepin.us

Area served: Hennepin (excluding the City of Minneapolis)

OVERVIEW

The Hennepin County Summer Youth Employment and Training Program funded through the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) offers critical work experience opportunities to low income and at-risk suburban youth ages 14 to 24. The goal is to meaningfully invest in young people who are the most likely to face threats to long-term economic success and connect them with experiences at a critical period in their lives. This past year brought numerous challenges through the pandemic and social unrest that made recruitment of participants and investment from employers more challenging than ever. Through this time, our summer youth program was there to address the specific needs of our participants and the diversity of challenges they face by integrating social and emotional learning, work readiness training, community engagement, career pathway exposure, immediate earnings from structured well-supervised work, and opportunities to earn academic credit or service-learning credit. The work done by our providers addresses racial disparities in employment and income and opens new opportunities to a new generation of skilled workers in a wide range of industries.

Hennepin County selected Tree Trust and BrookLynk as MYP providers to ensure that youth receive early exposure to experiential employment for the greatest predictor of future success in the workplace.

Tree Trust provided youth with the opportunity to explore outdoor work experience as crew members in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) or take part in an individual placement with one of Tree Trust's employer partners. The program runs for 9 weeks with participants working an average of 20 hours completing both job duties and engaging in career skill-building activities. For example, 16 YCC youth worked on building a boardwalk at Westwood Hills Nature Center in St. Louis Park. The project was coupled with employment readiness training facilitated by job coaches on site. Two participants completed their individual internships at CommonBond-Yorkdale supporting summer enrichment activities for children in their community. Participants had the opportunity to earn merit-based raises, academic credit, and a Tree Trust tool identification and safety certificate for those in YCC. All Hennepin County participants successfully completed the program. Tree Trust followed CDC guidelines in providing safety measures for the participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most changes were in regard to PPE and transportation, as their outdoor work model made it fairly easy to socially distance in a well-ventilated area.

BrookLynk provides work readiness training and paid work experiences to youth and young adults who live or attend school in Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, or surrounding suburbs and face barriers to employment. They delivered a hybrid program model in 2021 providing in-person and online training and employment opportunities as a continued response to limitations of COVID-19.

During the 2021 program year Get Ready!, BrookLynk's annual work readiness training program, was delivered exclusively online with 312 youth successfully completing the program. Followed by the delivery of Get Ready! in summer 2021 BrookLynk matched 96 youth to paid internships through the BrookLynk summer internship Program. In August 2021 BrookLynk delivered a 6-week paid online training series with 14 youth successfully completing the program.

In addition to successful youth engagement during the 2021 program year BrookLynk maintained a committed network of multi-sector employer partners who pledged 100 summer internships, identified 60 supervisors to support BrookLynk

interns during the ten-week summer internship program, and volunteered time at BrookLynk events such as virtual mock interviews and alumni workshops. Despite the pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism the 2021 program year proved successful for BrookLynk with more than 400 youth engaged across BrookLynk programs, more than \$250,000 in employer paid internship wages, and now 50 alumni that have landed part time, full time, and seasonal employment with BrookLynk’s network of employers.

BEST PRACTICES

Program Design Understanding the varied needs of youth living within the large suburban metro area, the Hennepin County MYP program design offers two approaches to work experience. Tree Trust programs appeal to the hands-on style or kinesthetic learning model while BrookLynk works with the local school districts within Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center to recruit youth and provide professional pathways where barriers to access may have existed. In the new program year, Ka Joog Nonprofit Organization will be added to Suburban Hennepin County’s roster of MYP providers, bringing their cultural understanding of East African youth. They also bring relationships with local schools and programming that provides training and internships in technology-based industries.

Employer Engagement and Supervisor Training Recognizing the incredible contribution and perspective of the youth who participate enhances the internship experience. BrookLynk provides supervisor training that focuses on mentoring youth, cultural competencies and implicit bias training. As part of the employer recruitment, employers for BrookLynk commit to paying 100% of the youth wages and through that demonstrate a proven commitment to the community and workforce development.

SERVING UNDERREPRESENTED YOUTH

Recruitment efforts focused on areas of racial and/economic disparity. At Tree Trust, relationships were fostered with educational partners, libraries, youth outreach centers, and culturally specific organizations to engage underrepresented youth. Crew leaders that were directly supervising crew members received diversity, equity, and inclusion training to enhance the knowledge and awareness of staff to create safe environments. 50 percent were from communities of color, 55 percent were youth with an identified disability, and 66% were on an individual employment plan.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Returning SYEP participants were eligible to apply for an Assistant Crew Leader position. These youth supported the staff Crew Leaders with the supervision of eight fellow youth crew members to complete community-based projects.

COVID RESPONSE

Hennepin County and our partners are committed to the safety of program participants and staff. Providers ensured that Covid Protocols were followed and adjusted accordingly based on the updates from the CDC guidelines, including contact tracing, notifications, and quarantining when needed. To adhere to guidelines, youth employment services training prior to the beginning of the program was completed virtually. Attendees received training in financial literacy and career exploration. Additionally, paperwork sessions that required in-person meetings took place over a two-week period in smaller groups to ensure social distancing.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “The best thing about working for Tree Trust is the social interaction. Meeting new people is always a great thing. Tree Trust has opened so many doors up for me and I am very appreciative. From working together with crewmates to working hard on projects this job has shown me the true outcome of hard work.” – Youth participant
- “I learned that I want a job outside using my hands and doing construction work.” – Youth participant
- “I loved being able to meet new people and work in an outdoor environment while also helping the community.” – Youth participant

SUCCESS STORY



Abby – YCC, Assistant Crew Leader: During her first year with Tree Trust two summers ago, Abby felt nervous and unsure of herself. She was confused about what to do and how to find her place within her crew. As time went on that summer and the next, and she spent more time getting to know those around her, Abby found it easier to be open and vulnerable with fellow Crew Members. This new attitude inspired her teammates to share, and it slowly started to shift the culture of the worksite environment. As her confidence grew, she found herself wanting to take on new challenges and push herself even farther. This summer (2021) she pursued and was assigned the position of Assistant Crew Leader through which she was able to encourage others to grow in their own journeys and practice a new skill of delegating responsibility

CARVER COUNTY

Carver County Health & Human Services

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www.co.carver.mn.us

Area served: Carver

OVERVIEW

Carver County Health & Human Services serves youth ages 14-24 utilizing funds from both the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP).

The Summer Youth Program offered by Carver County is a 10-week work experience allowing students to test their interests, gain work experience, and earn a paycheck. Throughout the program they are evaluated twice to help them know where they are exceling and where they could use improvement for when they enter the unsubsidized workforce.

Youth were introduced to career exploration by completing O-Net's mynextmove.org assessment. This assessment is based other theory of John Holland. The website provides a job interest report based on their assessment results, so youth have this information immediately before starting their work experience. The intention of using this assessment is to get the youth thinking about future career opportunities, and the training and education that may be needed to support their field of interest.

Pre-employment and Financial Literacy webinars were offered through Zoom prior to the SYP. The Pre-Employment webinar provided the youth the opportunity to learn about essential "soft skills" that are necessary to be successful in the workplace, including this work experience. One of our goals is to offer youth skills that they can use in everyday life. We also offered a Financial Literacy webinar as part of the summer youth program as youth begin to earn a paycheck.

Youth are encouraged to connect with CareerForce in Chaska to receive guidance from an Employment Counselor on building or enhancing a resume, pointers on interviewing, and/or assistance with job search and accessing training and support services.

BEST PRACTICES/COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Carver County collaborates with Southwest Metro Co-op for Youthbuild. Victoria Elementary, the Chaska Curling Center, and CareerForce Chaska participated in the SYP this year providing a genuine work experience and the worksite supervisors exhibited patience and created a supportive environment, while coaching and teaching youth skills needed to demonstrate appropriate work behavior, providing information about accountability, and offering valuable feedback during evaluations to help prepare youth for future employment and life. The Youthbuild work site also provides the opportunity for youth to earn academic credit while they learn valuable skills in the carpentry trade.

Pre-Employment Skills and Financial Literacy workshops were provided by the same vendor we utilized in 2019. Carver County braids MYP funding with WIOA youth funding and all participants were co-enrolled, if eligible, into both programs to maximize resources available to them.

SERVING YOUTH OF COLOR AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Carver County's goal is to recruit as many eligible youths as possible each year. We enrolled 11 youth, all 11 are traditionally under-represented in the workforce due to their race or disability. Demographically, all 11 experience a disability and are low-income while three are youth of color. Carver County is focusing on system integration to ensure that services have deep impacts on the lives of youth. School counselors, teachers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, DEED staff, Health and Human Service case managers, and corrections identify the Summer Youth Program as a valuable opportunity for providing necessary skills for the youth.

All the partners are committed to providing support and program enhancements to ensure the success of the youth participants. Carver County is focusing on providing services to all individuals with equity and cultural considerations in mind. If deemed ineligible for our programming, Carver County makes every effort to offer them additional resources and referrals to ensure their success.

SUCCESS STORY



Alex, age 17, was referred to the Summer Youth Employment Program by the Work Coordinator of the Eastern Carver County School District. He was interested in working for the Chaska Curling Center due to his relationship he had with the establishment prior to the SYP. This opportunity allowed him to practice the soft skills necessary to obtain full-time employment in the community.

This was Alex's first year in the Summer Youth Employment Program, and he completed all 10 weeks of the SYP with incredible reviews from his supervisor. Alex's supervisor brought up in a community meeting how valuable he had been as a part of the team throughout the summer and that he was very grateful to have him around the facility.

Alex completed the Career Cluster Interest profile where architecture, construction, and manufacturing were his highest match. He also completed the O*Net Work Importance Locator where support and achievement were identified as his highest factors. Lastly, Alex completed the O*Net Interest Profiler where he scored high on both Realistic and Investigative career fields. He indicated that none of these were a surprise to him and that he would like to pursue a work experience in the future that would allow him to do outdoor work.

Alex is returning to high school classes this fall, and looks forward to graduating, and becoming more independent. The summer program helped Alex think more realistically and learn about how he can move ahead to achieve his goals.

DAKOTA COUNTY

Dakota-Scott Workforce Services

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Phone: (952) 496-8510

careerforcemn.com/partner/dakota-scott-county-workforce-services

Area served: Dakota and Scott Counties

OVERVIEW

Tree Trust's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) offers promising young people between the ages of 14 and 21 a nine-week, hands-on, paid work experience. Youth have the option of either the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) doing outdoor environmental improvement projects or an individual internship working with a local Tree Trust employer partner. In 2021, 47 youth worked on YCC crews while two youth were placed in individual internships in Dakota County.

Youth Conservation Corps Crew Youth participants in YCC focused on the completion of landscape construction projects to improve parks and public spaces. Each crew had up to eight participants. There were six crews total in Dakota County. Three main staff positions worked with youth as they completed projects and developed their career readiness skills. Crew Leaders provided daily supervision and training, Field Coordinators oversaw the project sites and tools, and Job Coaches served as the direct support system and on-site counselors for the youth.

In 2021, Dakota County participants completed the following projects:

- Apple Valley: Keller Park & Cedar Isle Park – Sign Planters & Swing Bench Installation
- West St. Paul: Dodge Nature Center – Retaining Wall, Stream bed remediation & staircase
- Lakeville: King's Park – Retaining Wall & Landscape Bed
- Inver Grove Heights: Seidls Lake Park – Timber Staircase & New Trail

Individual Site Tree Trust partners with local employers who are willing to host youth at their organization. Two employers had internship placements. Randolph Schools is a returning employer that has partnered with Tree Trust for several years. The intern worked in a custodial position. Friends of the Mississippi River is a new employer partner that hosted an intern in a program assistant role.

BEST PRACTICES

Building Career Readiness Skills For a majority of the participants, Tree Trust's SYEP is their first paid work experience. Youth have the opportunity to work in a structured, safe, and supportive environment. Through employment readiness training, participants prepare for their future with professional development opportunities. Youth receive training around goal setting, budgeting and financial literacy, career exploration, completing job applications, and creating resumes.

Certification SYEP participants who engaged in project-based learning for landscaping and construction projects had the opportunity to earn Tree Trust Worksite Safety and Tool Identification Certifications. These certifications recognize the milestone of gaining entry-level trade skills. They are modeled after industry-recognized credentials that track professional development through skills achievement lists and tests. In SFY 2021, 37 Dakota County participants received Tree Trust certifications.

Earning Academic Credit Tree Trust partners with the Northeast Metro Area Learning Center to offer academic credit for work experience training to participants in our summer program. Youth can earn up to two elective credits upon completion of the summer program by participating in the Employment Skills lessons and receiving a satisfactory evaluation from their supervisor. In SFY 2021, 42 Dakota County youth earned academic credits.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Tree Trust leverages a referral network consisting of middle schools, secondary schools, colleges, adult basic education centers, Department of Employment and Economic Development Vocational Rehabilitation Services, CareerForce centers, libraries, organizations serving youth, and other social service organizations. Referral partners connect youth to Tree Trust opportunities, such as the SYEP.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “The best part of the program was getting to know my crew members and other Tree Trust employees. I met a whole culture of people and I also learned more job skills and people skills. My crew leader was very fun and admirable, with plenty of stories and lessons to tell while teaching.” – Youth participant
- “I definitely have changed. I have become more confident and more decisive. I’ve also learned how to be a better leader and to work with the youth.” – Crew Leader
- “He was able to manage his time to meet all the expectations of Tree Trust without much supervision and was given positive feedback by staff as to how he was as a worker. He even received the Governor's award at the end of the program. This significantly brought much pride and confidence in him being a first-time worker.” – Parent of youth participant

SUCCESS STORY



Isaiah improved significantly in self-confidence and job skills throughout the program. At the beginning of the season, he expressed that he did not feel confident in his leadership skills. He initially preferred letting others guide him through tasks. His independence and leadership skills grew immensely over the course of the summer, though. By the end, he had transformed into one of the strongest leaders and hardest workers in his crew. His crewmates now looked to him for tips and guidance in completing tasks. Isaiah earned a Tree Trust Worksite Safety and Tool Identification Certificate and received the Governor's award for his exemplary work as a crew member.

Responding to how SYEP has made an impact in his life, Isaiah said he has “become a lot more confident and better with groups.” Isaiah will be able to transfer this confidence and the leadership skills that he gained at Tree Trust to any future job or career.

SCOTT COUNTY

Dakota-Scott Workforce Services

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www.careerforcemn.com/partner/dakota-scott-county-workforce-services

Area served: Dakota and Scott Counties

OVERVIEW

Scott County Minnesota Youth Program youth participated in the summer program, with several participating year-round for career counseling, training, work experience, or job placement. Scott County utilizes a portion of the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) funding to assist youth that need credit recovery; especially high school seniors needing credits to get their high school diploma. Other youth are enrolled to assist them in meeting their education, training and work experience goals. MYP youth in post-secondary education programs include auto mechanic, registered nurse, barber, and CDL.

BEST PRACTICE

Scott County has collaborated with SouthWest Metro Intermediate District 288 (formerly Carver Scott Educational Cooperative) for the past 20+ years in credit recovery programs including Youthbuild, Makerspace and Rain Garden. Many youth have acquired credits to maintain grade level or to complete their high school diploma requirements during these summer activities. Students also gain skills in leadership, financial literacy, social/civics, OSHA 10, carpentry/landscaping skills and community awareness. The Youthbuild students also complete certification for CPR and First aid.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

- SouthWest Metro Intermediate District 288 – Youthbuild, Makerspace, and Rain Garden credit recovery and work experience programs.
- Public, non-profit and private sector employers – work experience programs
- Local secondary and alternative schools – referrals and worksites
- CAP Agency – referrals and worksites
- Scott County – referrals and worksites
- CareerForce location partners – referrals and worksite development
- Training vendors/agencies – education and training

Scott County Employment and Training administers many programs including the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Employment Services. Counselors do case reviews and internal referrals to youth programs. Youth are co-enrolled into other programs to help them achieve their goals. Scott County Employment and Training also collaborates with local youth serving agencies to serve targeted populations.

State, federal, and local resources leveraged by MYP funds: County funds, WIOA Youth Program funds, WIOA Adult funds, TANF Consolidated Fund, Youthbuild funds and local school funds.

SERVING YOUTH OF COLOR

Scott County staff recruited program applications from schools, previous enrollees and youth serving organizations. Program participants come from a wide variety of backgrounds, race, ethnicity, income levels, poverty groups, and abilities/disabilities.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “I am very grateful to my counselor for helping me find a job where I can learn new skills.” – Youth Participant

- “This was my first job and I loved it.” – Youth Participant
- The program really helped me financially and I am not sure if I would have been successful in my training without the support.” – Youth Participant
- “It feels great to help make a difference in a young person’s life.” – Supervisor

SUCCESS STORY

Liam was referred to the Scott County MYP program by his Vocational Rehabilitation Services Counselor. As a 20-year-old working on obtaining his high school diploma, Liam had never held a job, but was very interested in working a retail job in a back room/merchandise capacity. His youth employment counselor was able to collaborate with some employers in the community and was able to find some work experience opportunities for Liam in the retail industry.

Nervous about the interview process, Liam requested that his counselor accompany him. Liam was interviewed for two different positions and was offered work at both organizations! Liam chose to work with Marshall’s as he felt this was the best fit for him.

Liam loved his new work experience and did an outstanding job. His supervisor reported that “Liam is always going above and beyond, and his coworkers all enjoy working with him. He is such a go-getter and always gets his tasks done early. He is a joy to work with.”

Liam successfully completed his 16-week work experience program at Marshall’s and was immediately offered a permanent position and gladly accepted. He was also able to earn his high school diploma during this time.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Washington County CareerForce

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www.mn.gov/deed/woodbury

Area served: Washington

OVERVIEW

Washington County provides a mix of direct and contracted work experience and career pathway activities to eligible youth, although COVID-19 impacted design and delivery of both our direct and contracted services during the summer of 2020. Contracted services with Tree Trust were scaled back to accommodate social distancing and for work to be completed in a condensed timeframe during the summer, once we knew what Minnesota's and CDC's guidelines would allow. Our plan to provide support for ALC students working and completing credit recovery coursework over the summer ran into difficulties given the online vs. classroom-based instruction within the schools, and the interruptions to many of those students' worksites

BEST PRACTICES

Work Readiness Contracted services through Tree Trust offer summer work experience opportunities designed to teach work-readiness skills in a supportive and realistic work environment through its Summer Youth Employment Program. Skills taught include basic measuring and math, use of basic hand tools, and worksite safety within the context of public community space improvement through landscaping work. Youth received additional instruction on work search, including purpose of and best approach to completing applications and interviews, if they elected to continue in the career pathways component following their paid work experience.

Youth Conservation Corps Crew Tree Trust employed 12 Washington County youth in summer 2020 at Lake Elmo Park in Lake Elmo, MN. They worked for four weeks on a supervised crew of six to complete native prairie restoration by removing non-native and invasive species, removal of dead and downed limbs and trees to reduce fuel loads and fire hazard, and pruned overgrowth for improved trail passage and access. The work completed improved the County public park's environment, while building youth competencies in employment skills. Participants worked two to three 8-hour days per week and could earn a merit-based raise. Youth also completed basic occupational interest assessments to be prepared for the career pathways component following their conservation corps crew work.

Career Pathways Exposure Following their work with Tree Trust, seven youth elected to participate in virtual, 1:1 career pathways activities to explore occupational interests and earn incentives for completing guided, interactive assignments. CareerForce staff guided assignments focused on selection of 2-3 occupations that most interest the youth; the skills and types of training required for those occupations, review of the labor market (including wages) for those occupations, both at the county level and regionally; identification of avenues of training to enter and advance in those occupations.

SERVING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Tree Trust has 40 years of experience working with youth with disabilities. In 2020, 66% of participants served in Washington County identified as having a disability. Recruiting is accomplished through targeted outreach to, and referrals from, partner organizations that work directly with this population. Serving these youth and helping them find success in the workplace is foundational to Tree Trust's mission.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Tree Trust partners with area schools, county libraries, and CareerForce locations to aid in the youth recruitment application process. Park and recreation agencies, municipalities, public schools, and private businesses collaborate with Tree Trust to provide projects and worksites.

Washington County has also had a history of collaboration with Family Means, a community-based agency that provides after-school and summer programming for children and teens in low-income communities. Washington County's MN Youth Program offers paid work experience typically to older youth who live in the communities. They work as program assistants in the afterschool and summer activities, as well as serve as mentors to younger youth participating in the Family Means programs, gaining leadership and work readiness skills. As a result, the younger youth have positive role models within their own community. Many have been overheard saying that they want to be a program assistant when they get older.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- "Tree Trust helped me to meet new people and to prepare myself for my future in the workplace." – Youth Participant
- "I learned how to take charge during a project." – Youth Participant

SUCCESS STORY

Jacob participated in the 2020 Tree Trust Summer Youth Employment Program at the Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Jacob's crew leader said, "He was a very hard and persistent worker." She was also impressed that Jacob "grew into a leadership role and was always one of the first crew members to volunteer for a task." This year's participants had the additional challenges of wearing a mask and social distancing while working outside in the heat. Jacob's crew leader saw great improvement in how "he adapted to the harsh working conditions and having to wear a mask throughout the summer." These culminated into Jacob receiving the Governor's Award for his crew. Upon asking Jacob about his favorite part of the program, true to his character, he said "Log hauling and finishing a hard day's work". Well done, Jacob!



NORTHWEST MINNESOTA

Northwest Minnesota Inter-County Community Council (ICCC)

Catherine Johnson, Executive Director

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www.intercountycc.org

Area served: Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau

OVERVIEW

In WDA 1, Inter-County Community Council (ICCC) provides youth programs year-round for at-risk youth ages 14-24. ICCC works with education providers, social service agencies, probation officers, family services, and foster care to identify youth who are at risk. ICCC connects youth who have significant barriers to activities and/or employment opportunities that assist with reducing barriers to employment. ICCC focuses on assisting youth participants with developing and maintaining job and soft skills in order to be successful in the workforce or a higher education program. ICCC Case Managers review in-demand occupations and provide youth participants with assessment tools to identify the best career choice based on their individual interests. ICCC provides services through paid work experiences and additional training if needed. This includes, but isn't limited to, GED, high school diploma, post-secondary education or occupational certifications. ICCC Employment Case Managers work closely with each youth participant on an individual level to ensure continued success in school, worksites, and the program. ICCC's goal is for each youth participant to feel valued and employable in the future. These services are provided through the use of the Minnesota Youth Program grant funds received directly, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds from the Northwest Private Industry Council. All activities receive the input and support of our local boards.

BEST PRACTICES

Success in the MYP program has been with the coordination of the Employment Case Managers and all partners involved in the youth participants current situation. The Employment Case Managers work to develop relationships with each youth participant based on individual needs and takes time to understand each youth participant's situation in order to provide guidance and resources to reduce barriers to employment. The Employment Case Managers are compassionate and strive to create open lines of communication, whether it is visiting the youth at a worksite and encouraging them to continue doing a good job or being there when things become tough. ICCC's goal is for each youth participant to be successful. In rural Minnesota, placing youth in work sites that align with their interests can be difficult. To overcome this, ICCC Case Managers take the time to develop and maintain relationships with local employers to ensure youth participants receive the best worksite experiences possible. Employment Case Managers provide mentoring to each youth participant at their worksite to ensure they receive the necessary job skills and soft skills to be successful in the future. Local school districts and education providers have been very helpful in sending referrals for students whom they feel can benefit from the programs. This referral system has been very successful for youth who didn't know about the programs and needed additional resources and skill building.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Various agencies collaborate with ICCC to help youth participants achieve personal success. Building these relationships has been a critical part in the MYP program remaining successful. Partners in this collaboration include local schools, social services, public health agencies, courts, probation offices, non-profits, local city organizations, and private businesses.

SERVING YOUTH OF COLOR

ICCC is looking to expand services that will focus on serving diverse populations. ICCC is working with various organizations in East Grand Forks to provide resources to New Americans. ICCC is attending forums, school meetings and social service meetings to provide information about our programs that can be shared with New Americans with the increase in open jobs and the amount of people retiring, ICCC feels it is vital to build our workforce up to meet the

demands of employers. New Americans will need to be integrated into our workforce to help sustain the communities and labor forces. ICCC is working to ensure New Americans have the opportunity to gain work skills and knowledge to grow and become successful in the current job market.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

ICCC works with local schools, area learning centers and adult basic education facilities to focus on career exploration for students. ICCC utilizes funding through MYP to provide presentations and one-on-one services to students for career exploration. During the presentations, students receive information about occupations in demand, cost of tuition for post-secondary training, cost of living, and the importance of job skills. With one-on-one services, students can explore occupations further and obtain additional information about specific occupations. The one-on-one session can also be used to help develop resumes, fill out job applications, learn interviewing skills and ask any other questions they may have. Students are given the opportunity to take assessments and discover what their strengths and interests are. From there Case Managers can explain what further training is required to be successful in jobs aligned with those interests.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “I was able to gain additional skills and do something I enjoy.” – Youth participant
- “The youth have learned some great skills for the future.” – Worksite Supervisor

SUCCESS STORY

Aaron had tried to find employment on his own, applying at many of the typical places in northern Minnesota, a gas station, and the local Dairy Queen. He could not make it past the interview portion and struggled to secure employment. Aaron’s educational support teacher referred him to Inter-County Community Council to see if a work experience would help Aaron overcome whatever barrier he was facing. Aaron’s work experience was with a local veterinarian’s office. During his work experience, he received guided practice with interview skills and tips to help him secure his own employment. He also got so much more. Aaron was able to gain hands-on experience in the work of a veterinary technician, a career he was interested in. Aaron is now in his first semester at Vermillion Community College for the Vet Tech program. Because of his work experience, he was immediately admitted to the major, has found mentors at home to assist him while attending post-secondary training, and a base of knowledge to scaffold his learning onto. He knows that his two and a half years of training will lead him to a career that is in-demand, pays well, and most importantly, will bring him a career he will enjoy.



RURAL MINNESOTA

Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (RMCEP)

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Area served: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomon, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin

OVERVIEW

Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Programs (RMCEP) programs for youth focus on assessment and career exploration, job seeking, work experience, school funding and support services. Working with participants, we focus on their career pathway interests for employment and/or training and when possible, find a worksite that fits within their career interest. A great example is the successful work experience placement with a local taxidermist who offered to be a worksite for a youth who had an interest in that field. With rural communities, there can be limitations, but we still provide them with a work experience, soft skills and work ethic. Serving the rural communities can bring challenges but we see it as a way to educate the communities about services RMCEP can provide to all individuals in the community.

RMCEP braids funding as needed between MYP, WIOA youth funds, Youthbuild, TANF Youth, Youth at Work as well as HECAP and Outreach to School funds to provide seamless services to a wide array of youth. RMCEP is a non-profit serving 19 counties in WDA2. With eight offices spread across mostly rural counties, one that employs a mobile office concept, and one in a county considered a more “urban” area bordering North Dakota, we are prepared to respond to our communities with broad, diverse brushstrokes. Youth programs serve participants ages 14 through 24 through person-centered assessments, comprehensive services to build and enhance work skills, and steady guidance to identify and leverage a career pathway unique to each youth.

BEST PRACTICES

Youth Coordinators continued to use a variety of platforms to meet youth where they are. Meeting youth in a way and place that is comfortable for them is key for successful communication. This meant either in person or through various technology venues such as Zoom meetings, Google Meets, texting, email, etc. They have learned to adapt to whatever platform the participant needs or feels comfortable with. One of our Teams in our service area used their local team Facebook page to regularly post advertising for the Youth programs we run and did some “client testimonial” videos which were posted to the page also.

Youth Coordinators focused on what was needed to help youth be successful, listening for understanding, deciding on a solid path, and decision making. A focus on employability skills, career exploration through work experience, job shadows, career assessments and interest profiles, labor market information, referral, and support in locating and accessing connecting social services such as housing and transportation are all best practices included in plan development and service delivery. Employer engagement and support in mentor relationships are also cultivated. In general, best practices are providing access to information on career pathways, support in academics, training, work experience, and wraparound support services that provide an obtainable path to credentials in demand in the local labor market.

Participants have identified feeling isolated and depressed related to great frustration over distance learning as well as lost milestones related to graduating, proms and even taking tours of school campuses to prepare for the transition to college. Students that were doing well in hands-on learning were suddenly struggling to complete virtual learning. Youth Coordinators shared mental health resources with their participants and encouraged them to find someone to talk with to provide avenues for overcoming these feelings.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

This past year, our staff at RMCEP focused on outreach to communities to develop relationships with entities and businesses that were new to working with us. Each of our locations held a job fair in the spring which resulted in referrals from individuals and businesses that attended. RMCEP Youth Coordinators have strong partnerships with their local schools, VRS, probation/juvenile justice, school IEP managers, foster care, and developed additional business worksites. Of most significance are our worksites, which provide a setting for youth to “try out” an occupation, learn employability skills, and grow from social exchanges. With these partnerships we are then able to serve the same population to collaborate services as well as obtain and give referrals. We serve youth in MFIP families, youth on waivers, and youth involved in foster care or juvenile justice programs. Local partners in our communities run the gamut from schools and ALCs, ABE, mental health providers, crisis centers, Youth Centers for homeless or at-risk populations, and Youth Ministry.

SERVING YOUTH OF COLOR/YOUTH UNDER-REPRESENTED

RMCEP employs resources and speakers on inclusion and diversity in our professional development opportunities to build staff cultural competencies. We serve an area with three American Indian tribal nations and on the west side of our service area is the border city of Moorhead which has been the home for many immigrants in the area. This past year, RMCEP served 439 youth participants. Of those participants, 13% were American Indian, 5.5% were Black/African, 47% had a disability, 6.6% were involved in the justice system, 3.2% were in foster care, 2.3% were homeless and 43.7% were female. Youth with a disability represent the fastest growing underserved population which may require more complex or lengthy partnering to make sure all aspects of interventions and supports are available to the participant. All our youth clients have different needs, and we do our best to support them and find the resources needed to help them be successful.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS/CAREER ADVISOR COMPONENT

RMCEP has a long rich history of collaboration with our school districts. Our Youth Coordinators work with school Guidance Counselors, Principals, and Teachers on a continual basis. Youth Coordinators are recruited as classroom speakers, to participate in career fairs, contribute through Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTIC), and as welcome members at IEP meetings. Using MCIS allows us to share assessments and career exploration activities with schools. We also added the use of YouScience this year as part of our Career Advising services. Each spring our Coordinators notify school staff of the MYP summer program.

MYP funds can be leveraged to extend the program beyond summer to throughout the school year. RMCEP also uses MYP funds to support youth during the school year. Eligible MYP participants are considered for enrollment into any of RMCEP’s other programs, WIOA Youth Programs, Youthbuild, and TANF Innovations, so continued services and supports can be provided through blending and braiding program funds when a particular funding source runs low to continue seamless services.

RMCEP had contracts with 16 school districts to provide a full Career Advisor menu of services. Career Advisors worked individually with nearly 3,300 students to determine appropriate career goals and develop plans to reach those goals. We were able to provide group career navigation services to a further 15 schools, which provided students with tools to determine appropriate career pathways.

Participants who left secondary schooling prior to achieving a diploma are connected to Adult Basic Education (ABE) to complete a GED, and some drop-out students thrive at ALCs rather than traditional high school settings. We also connect students to TRIO/Accessibility Services, Financial Aid, and Career Services on post-secondary campuses who want to pursue further career pathways related training.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “I just wanted to say THANK YOU for all your help. I seriously appreciate everything you’ve done to help me, and I can’t thank you enough. I don’t know where I’d be if it wasn’t for you helping me.” – OSY participant that was

new to the area and struggling with basic needs. Provided support services, assessment, and job search assistance.

- “This program (RMCEP Youth Program) is a great way for me to try out what having a job looks like, without it, I may not be successful in a regular job. I don’t know what to do when it comes to having a job, this way I can learn before having a “real” job.” – MYP youth participant
- A long voicemail was received thanking RMCEP for taking the time to identify a good fit worksite of interest for his youth. Parent went on and on to say how appreciative he and his family were that we dedicated to matching them so well and how great the worksite supervisors were. This father stated he felt the boys were getting the proper mentorship they needed. – Parent of youth participant
- “Her communication and interaction increase each week. Gaining some confidence.” – Worksite supervisor
- “Thank you for giving me this opportunity to gain some work experience.” – Youth participant

SUCCESS STORY



Joanne was a youth enrolled in MFIP and later enrolled in OSY, TANF, and DEI. When she was first enrolled in MFIP she was pregnant and about to have her baby. She was also in a treatment facility. She enrolled in Minnesota Youthbuild on her own. When she became enrolled in Rural MN CEP youth programs, she had recently moved into her own place with her son and had graduated from treatment. She worked with the Youthbuild program to earn her high school diploma as well as job skills and life skills. She excelled in the program, and they offered her an internship in their Leadership Program. This is a difficult role to earn, but they were very impressed at her hard work and leadership they offered her the role. It came with added responsibilities, and she continued to excel in her new role. During Joanne’s enrollment we were able to offer her support when needed. Most often we were able to assist with gas costs which were necessary for her to get to and from Youthbuild. She was also able to obtain her driver’s license during her enrollment. Upon completion of Joanne’s enrollment in Youthbuild she has earned her high school diploma she planned to attend Leach Lake Tribal College (LLTC) for a degree in accounting.

Joanne started college in spring 2019 taking her generals. She took fall 2020 off due to COVID-19 restrictions and feeling she would have not done well in all online courses. Joanne participated in work training in the Summer of 2020 – Fall 2020 at the Bemidji Community Food Shelf. She started out struggling with a routine and motivation at work. Her supervisor recognized this and started giving Joanne responsibility and her own projects, which led to her excelling. Joanne returned to the worksite for summer 2021 and plans to work through the harvest. Joanne does very well at this worksite. Joanne returned to school spring 2021 is planning on returning this fall to continue moving forward towards her accounting degree.

SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA

Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development Inc.

Jinny Rietmann, Director

2070 College View Rd E

Rochester, MN 55904

Phone: (507) 292-5152

www.workforcedevelopmentinc.org

Area served: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, and Wabasha

OVERVIEW

Workforce Development, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization providing employment and training services to youth and young adults in the 10 counties of Southeastern Minnesota. These services include extensive career counseling, work skills development, career pathways programming, preparation for employment, and hands-on work experiences. Assessments and plan development are completed with individuals involved with the programs to identify interests, aptitudes and education and work goals. Work experiences and career pathways are developed based on these interests and skills. Employers provide mentoring, worksite supervision, and cultural competency training to help youth while they are learning on the job. Counselors, youth and young adults, parents, other youth-serving community organizations and employers work together to ensure a successful work experience and career pathway. Educational goals of completing high school, obtaining a GED or pursuing post-secondary education are also included within an Individual Service Strategy for each youth, and these education goals are braided in their career pathways programming.

BEST PRACTICES

Career Pathways opportunities are the heart of WDI's youth and young adult programming. Several Career Pathways training programs are currently available through WDI, focused on the key sectors in the region including Construction/Trades, Manufacturing, Public Sector jobs, and Manufacturing. One example is our Construction/Trades program where individuals receive 4-8 weeks of training and are often moved directly into a union apprenticeship program. WDI seeks applicants from underserved populations for these programs, including people of color, women and those previously incarcerated.

"Bridges to the Future," is a collaboration between Faribault, Red Wing, and Northfield, including the MN Correctional Facility-Red Wing, and is partially funded through the Youthprise/Social Innovation Fund. This initiative offers career pathways approaches for youth ages 14-24 in those three cities who are in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system, homeless, or are disconnected from school and work. The primary focus is high school completion with dual enrollment options through partnerships with area higher education institutions and postsecondary training in career clusters that have clear pathways to higher degrees.

WDI also utilizes a multi-tiered career pathways and work readiness program called Emerging Leaders, which collaborates with other community organizations to offer mentoring, independent living skills, while also offering inter-generational work readiness training, career pathways training, and work experience. This program offers opportunities for youth and young adults to gain credentials and real-life work experience.

WDI has been involved with various experiential learning programs throughout Southeast Minnesota. In Freeborn and Mower counties, we are offering apprenticeship opportunities that connect youth with Career Pathways while still in high school or earning their GED. In Houston and Fillmore counties, we have a multi-school/employer collaboration where seven school districts have developed work-based learning opportunities that mirror one another to offer similar ways to connect for employers.

WDI also offers scholarship opportunities to program enrollees who choose to further their education at the post-secondary level. For the fall semester of 2020, seven youth who completed the scholarship application requirements were chosen to receive tuition assistance. These youth are entering a variety of fields of study.

The Youthbuild program is a partnership with Rochester Alternative Learning Center, through which 10 youth per semester earn school credit and a work experience learning the basic skills of carpentry and construction. Their skills are put to use building structures (such as equipment sheds) for local schools and community agencies. Students are co-enrolled in other WDI programming to provide additional support.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

In our youth programming, we find the most success when we collaborate with several agencies and partners. A few of the strong partnerships are those within education: high school principals, counselors and teachers, adult basic education, and community college systems. Those within various nonprofit and government agencies are also strong partners: social workers, mental health providers, YMCA, probation officers, and youth workers within organizations such as the Empowerment Center, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Community Corrections, United Way, Homeless Coalitions, Somalia Rebuild, Red Wing Youth Outreach, the Rochester Link program and the Rochester Boys and Girls Club. We greatly value the input and participation of youth in all aspects of programming as well. Some of the most important partners are employers, providing real-life work experiences and funding for our career pathways programming, including key stakeholders such as Mayo Clinic, Habitat ReStore and local trades union partners.

We use a wide variety of funding streams to help support our programs. All of these are vital to help WDI maintain consistent programming. Our MYP funds are often braided into co-enrollments with other programs to better serve our youth, and these programs benefit by receiving additional leverage of these funds. Adult Career Pathways, Youth Support Services, Career Pathways Pilot Program (CP3), Youth Intervention Program, Healthy Transitions, TANF, Youthbuild and Pre-ETS are examples of this. Without the availability of co-enrollment with our multiple funding sources, opportunities for youth would be greatly diminished. Being able to diversify our services allows our youth staff to implement more thorough programming, thus providing more benefit to our youth.

SERVING YOUTH OF COLOR

Through the development of our Emerging Leaders program, we have advanced in developing partnerships and coming together with our community organizations to develop a collaborative youth programming model for Southeast Minnesota. WDI currently employs multiple individuals who provide targeted outreach and programming to underrepresented individuals in their specific communities. We continue to make gains in tackling equity in employment for youth of color. Approximately 13% of Southeast Minnesota residents are members of Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

Career Planners work closely with schools, providing information to administrators, teachers and students on the services available through youth programming, and we use the Career EdVenture curriculum to provide schools with easy access to a variety of topics and services. We have regular hours at the various schools throughout the 43 districts in our region. Working with school counselors and reaching students through class presentations allows students easy access to employment and education opportunities. Our Youth Career Planners also give group presentations at career-focused school events. Topics include career assessments, teaching essential employment skills, job search techniques, resume writing, interview skills and financial literacy.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “I really appreciate the help WDI gave me. They helped me find a job while I was still in school.” – Youth participant
- “This scholarship allows me to attend school. I wouldn’t be able to without it.” – Youth scholarship recipient
- “The staff at WDI is always willing to help. They were able to get me clothes for my work” – Youth participant

SUCCESS STORY

Jerrad enrolled in WDI programming while attending the Rochester Alternative Learning Center. During this time, he was involved in the Youthbuild program, a semester-long course designed to teach students the basics of carpentry and construction. Jerrad successfully completed the course and was instrumental in helping construct an equipment shed for use by an area partner. While in school, he also participated in football and has worked at HyVee and Caribou Coffee. Jerrad graduated from the ALC and he is exploring the fields of law enforcement and forestry. Jerrad is an example of a successful co-enrollment, as he was able to access WDI services through both MYP and Youthbuild.



WINONA

Winona County WorkForce Council

Dawn Lubahn, Youth Program Manager

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Phone: (507) 205-6066

www.CareerForceMN.com/winona

Area served: Winona County

OVERVIEW

Youth programs serve youth (ages 16-24) with various barriers to employment as well as the families of youth, employers, and the community at large. Building confidence, soft skills and specific work-related skills are benefits to program participants (in addition to the paycheck for employed youth). The youth program offers hope to participants and their families. Some youth earn a high school diploma with the help of the programs; they also earn school credit for their work experience.

The program provides local businesses with employees. Local employers gain first-hand experience with a person with barriers, maybe a disability or some legal problems, introducing them to a whole new labor pool. Many employers enjoy the opportunity to mentor and train, to watch the personal growth process of their youth participants. Everyone benefits when someone discovers their “niche,” begins a career path that is their passion and becomes a contributing member of the local community.

BEST PRACTICES

Work Experience Class is offered at Winona Senior High School for students with disabilities. Youth review information on child labor laws, work site responsibilities, how to keep a job, managing money and safety on the job. Student, Work Experience Teacher, and CareerForce Winona Youth and Young Adult Coordinator work together to find a suitable work site. Once the work site is determined, the student is given responsibilities and duties. The students work four days of the week and one day is spent in the classroom discussing job seeking skills to help youth find their next job. Students create up-to-date resumes and cover letters along with filling out an application for the Youth Work Skills Challenge.

Youth Work Skills Challenge is a day where students of all abilities come together to learn, educate and compete against one another in real-world work scenarios such as applications, resumes and interviews. Students can listen to speakers, receive resources, and talk to various agencies focused on life skills and/or opportunities of growth in careers.

This year a pilot was started to have individuals try teleworking as part of the work experience, so far this has been a successful endeavor for both the youth and employer. Keys to the success include a dedicated mentor/supervisor who regularly checks in with the student, clearly outlined work plans and outcomes and identifying student employees who are self-motivated and have access to technology and the internet.

An important part of our program is having youth work in the community with local employers. Before sending a youth into the community to work, staff ensure they are job ready. Indications of this include promptness in returning phone calls, follow-through with assignments and timeliness in appointments at the CareerForce Center, and professional presentation at their workplace. We feel the youth gain a deeper appreciation of work readiness through the actual experience of having to be at work on time, follow a supervisor’s instructions, get along with coworkers and all those other work-related soft skills learned on the job. Staff work to provide worksites that are easily accessible to the youth, including both youth in the cities of Winona County and youth in the rural areas.

Youth staff work with students in three school districts (Winona, Lewiston-Altura and St. Charles) throughout the school year, collaborating with teachers to provide our services as a complement to what is being taught in the work search classroom. For younger participants, staff are working closely with the schools. For older youth, we work with referral sources.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

Outreach to Schools (OTS) Activities in Winona County complement the work of existing school counselors and provide youth and families with career exploration, college information and current labor market information. Examples of Outreach to Schools activities that have been implemented include (but are not limited to):

- Providing information to individuals and groups regarding occupations and industries in demand and with the highest growth throughout the region using current labor market information, which may include providing opportunities for students to directly experience occupations through job shadowing, mentoring and business tours.
- Providing workshops to classes on planning for post-secondary training, including accessing financial aid and selecting an appropriate program, as well as other career planning topics such as goal setting and navigating business culture.
- Tours of the Winona CareerForce Center and information about the resources available at the Winona CareerForce Center and how to access and utilize the resources.
- Connections to community and private sector resources through a local career fair offered in the fall and spring, career events, and tours of businesses in strategic industries.
- Group and individual sessions including instruction and presentations on O*Net, labor market information and strategic industries and in-demand occupations.
- Individualized career development activities including career exploration and career assessments, resume preparation, mock interviews and job search assistance.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

The Winona Youth and Young Adult Program partners with and utilizes community resources provided by organizations such as REACH, the Chamber, and SEMCIL to coordinate services for area youth. We synchronize our efforts with Vocational Rehabilitation Services and counselors with the MFIP programs to maximize positive outcomes. Partnering through presentations and services for K–12 school systems as well as Minnesota State College Southeast and the Winona State University. Staff also presented information to groups of youth who have been involved with the juvenile justice system.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- “We enjoy having the youth help at the Center. We feel that we are helping them learn new skills, which will help them in the future.” — Supervisor
- “Working at the Resource Center taught me how to be organized and neat. It was fun to help the clients.” — Youth participant

RAMSEY COUNTY

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

Ling Becker, Director

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Phone: (651) 266-9890

www.ramseycounty.us/youngadultemploymentprogram

Area served: Saint Paul & Ramsey County

OVERVIEW

In 2020-2021, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions (WFS) Youth Employment & Training Program underwent a number of changes. Historically, WFS staff delivered year-around supports to youth and young adults ages 14-24, supports funded by the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Youth Innovation Program. In 2019, Workforce Solutions began to also deliver these supports through three vendor partners, Hmong American Partnership, Hired and YWCA St Paul. In spring 2021, WFS ceased in directly providing these supports and transitioned to supporting these vendor partners in fully delivering the supports. This transition and the ongoing provision of employment and training services are guided by Ramsey County's vision of "A vibrant community where all are valued and thrive".

BEST PRACTICES

The services that are delivered through Ramsey County and partners include individualized, year-round comprehensive guidance supports (including work experiences, internships, support services, etc.). MYP continues to provide many youth and young adults with work experiences and other entry employment opportunities. Additionally, through use of Support Services, MYP allows youth, who may otherwise have barriers to employment, such as lack of transportation, to successfully complete a work experience and professional development activities.

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, Workforce Solutions and the partners readjusted the service model to ensure youth and young adults continued to get employment and training services safely. First, all counseling and case management activities were transitioned to phone and virtual service delivery. Second, staff began providing virtual learning opportunities such as Clean Up Your Social Media, Learn More About Starting Your Business, Get Prepared for an Interview, and Take a Virtual College Tour. Ramsey County and partners continued to work with local businesses and organizations to provide internship opportunities for youth and young adults both in virtual and safe, in-person settings.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Many community and state partners have made the efforts of Ramsey County Youth and Young Adult Employment Program successful. First, WFS's three vendor partners, Hired, Hmong American Partnership and YWCA St Paul are critical partners the success of young people, by delivering the case management and other program elements. Educational partners include but are not limited to Saint Paul Public Schools, Roseville Area Schools, St. Paul School District Career Connect, Saint Paul College, Century College, City Academy, and Change Inc. Additionally, many employer partners aided in development and support of youth participants, including ISD 622, Ramsey County Libraries, Minnesota Trades Academy, The Sanneh Foundation, Solid Ground, Cookie Cart, Bridgemakers, World Youth Connect and many more.

SERVING YOUTH OF COLOR

As the most racially and ethnically diverse county in Minnesota, Ramsey County WFS focuses many efforts on addressing economic disparities the persist in communities. Using county and state data, WFS and partners strategically plans and delivers youth services to neighborhoods and communities who have historically been under-served by the workforce system. Most of the youth WFS Youth and Young Adult Employment Program serve are youth and young adults of color. Through direct MYP services (individualized guidance counseling and supports), 84% of youth served by WFS are youth

who identified as a race other than “white alone” and 13% of youth served identified their ethnicity as “Hispanic or Latin(x)”. In 2020-2021, WFS increased the percentage of youth of color served over the previous year. OTS also focused on serving youth of color with post-high school employment and educational planning. In 2019-2020, 72% of students served in OTS were students of color.

OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS/CAREER ADVISOR COMPONENT

Many local students receive supports through the Outreach to Schools (OTS) program, funded by MYP. In the 2020-2021 school year, OTS provided two local high schools with three paid, college-aged, interns to aid the work of school counselors in assisting students with post-high school employment and educational planning. Because of challenges that are presented by Minnesota’s extremely high student to counselor ratio, many students, especially those in disenfranchised communities, often receive very limited post-high school planning. The 2020-2021 school year presented some unique challenges due to COVID-19. All of WFS school partners began the school year 100% virtually. Because of this, WFS provided interns to work, virtually, with the guidance counseling staff. Interns were trained by WFS staff and Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) personnel on the use of labor market information, job seeking skills, resume development and composition, interviewing skills etc. Interns worked approximately 5-8 hours per week, and during this time they either met via video chat with students to help them with current course work, job search, post-secondary planning, etc. or assisted the Office of College & Career Readiness with developing a digital library of college and career resources.

CUSTOMER COMMENT

“I am extremely grateful for the opportunities and resources that have become available to me over the past year as an intern with High School for Recording Arts. I can wholeheartedly say that I wouldn’t have the same confidence as an intellectual, as a student, nor as a professional, had I not had access to this internship. Thank you very much.” – Morgan, youth participant

SUCCESS STORY



Lawrence, an MYP participant, shares:

“These past couple months have been a rollercoaster, from graduation to starting my career path. It’s been quite the journey. Graduation was fine, to be frank, it was a given and I didn’t feel much about it, just something to get over with. I’ve been more looking forward to my Eagle Scout and completing that. After graduation, during the summer, I started to Minnesota Trade Academy (MTA) Program (supported by MYP) to get my foot in the door of Union Trades. After I completed MTA Internship I went to the Local Union Hall for Plumbers and signed up for their Plumbing Helper Program to see if a company would call me needing help. During the time in between Hired has been helping me out by providing me funds for my gas plus work clothes and I’ve been meeting with Phillip to talk about my goals and aspirations for the future and how he can help me achieve my goals. Finally, I got a call a few

weeks later from Harris Mechanical and I’ve been working there for about two weeks now just plotting my future. I just finished up my Eagle Scout last week so I’m very excited and proud of myself for that. I’m not sure what trade I want to do, but I know the future is bright, all I have to do is work to achieve it.”

SFY 2021 MINNESOTA YOUTH PROGRAM (MYP) DATA SUMMARY

(JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021)

COMBINED WDA TOTALS		TOTAL	PCT	WDA 1	WDA 2	WDA 3	WDA 4	WDA 5	WDA 6	WDA 7	WDA 8	WDA 9H
1. Total Participants Served		2,684		55	255	151	91	172	90	188	336	166
1a. Total Participants Exited		1,176		27	88	74	40	76	41	77	118	73
Gender	2a. Male	1,348	50.2%	31	157	78	39	72	44	87	178	83
	2b. Female	1,325	49.4%	24	98	73	51	100	46	100	158	81
	2c. Did Not Self-Identify	11	0.4%	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Age	3a. 14 - 15	758	28.2%	9	83	19	11	30	16	25	28	20
	3b. 16 -17	972	36.2%	32	94	60	24	60	44	88	121	86
	3c. 18	386	14.4%	11	42	49	12	26	23	34	59	33
	3d. 19 - 21	412	15.4%	3	29	18	30	38	6	31	86	26
	3e. 22 - 24	158	5.9%	0	7	5	14	18	1	12	42	1
Ethnicity / Race	4a. Hispanic/Latino	304	11.3%	6	16	3	5	16	34	46	55	12
	4b. American Indian or Alaska Native	95	3.5%	2	34	5	9	2	3	1	4	1
	4c. Asian or Pacific Islander	121	4.5%	0	1	2	1	7	3	2	17	31
	4d. Black or African American	782	29.1%	3	15	1	21	8	6	18	53	85
	4e. White	1,358	50.6%	41	203	139	37	139	63	149	233	33
	4f. Multi Race	166	6.2%	5	2	4	23	7	1	16	25	5
Education Level	5a. Grades K-12 (No Diploma/GED)	2,214	82.5%	54	225	87	66	144	82	155	238	125
	5b. High School graduate or equivalent	365	13.6%	0	28	59	20	17	5	27	71	29
	5c. Post-Secondary Education	104	3.9%	1	2	5	5	11	3	6	26	12
Other Demographics	6. Limited English Proficient	171	6.4%	9	5	0	0	11	3	5	16	5
	7. Youth From Families Receiving Public Assistance	1,684	62.7%	38	137	82	59	71	32	116	161	102
	8. Foster Youth	127	4.7%	3	16	8	25	11	3	17	11	12
	9. Youth with a Disability	1,266	47.2%	46	176	112	49	98	48	113	194	38
	10. High School Drop-Out	140	5.2%	0	15	4	17	21	1	14	45	1
	11. Offender	157	5.8%	0	17	11	9	6	2	36	38	2
	12. Pregnant or Parenting Youth	165	6.1%	1	7	8	9	18	5	27	58	4
	13. Basic Skills Deficient	776	28.9%	26	209	77	41	116	11	56	25	51
	14. Homeless or Runaway Youth	119	4.4%	0	1	4	24	7	0	13	18	2
	15. Not Employed at Program Enrollment	2,208	82.3%	52	230	98	79	133	64	156	245	124
	PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE											
1. Received Education/Job Training Activities		1,491	55.6%	47	17	137	56	121	74	188	336	1
2. Received Work Experience Activities		1,712	63.8%	34	158	92	59	73	38	111	139	47
3. Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities		431	16.1%		3		1	7	6	8	15	47
4. Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities		1,779	66.3%	88	31	135	17	199	5	132	454	1
5. Received Mentoring Activities		460	17.1%		27	54			16	121	3	1
6. Received Support Services		225	8.4%	2	29	10	11	31	8	40	13	1
INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE (Based on Number of Exitors)												
1. Attained Work Readiness or Education Goals in ISS		1,145	97.4%	27	88	65	21	76	41	97	118	73
2. Received Academic/Service Learning Credit		857	72.9%	27	2	52	13	76	41	11	118	73
3. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, or Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Drop-out-Returned to School		857	72.9%	18	42	8	14	50	41	43	56	73
4. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military or Entered Employment		371	31.5%	11	36	70	8	45	14	33	75	2
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION												
1. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Excellent"		269	42.9%		39	4	3	16	2	20	31	46
2. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Very Good"		256	40.8%		43	1	3	7	4	13	21	46
3. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Average"		87	13.9%		18	0	0	4	1	5	4	18
4. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Below Average"		8	1.3%		1	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
5. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Poor"		7	1.1%		1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
6. Total Number of Surveys Completed		627		0	102	5	6	28	7	40	57	113

COMBINED WDA TOTALS		TOTAL	PCT	WDA 9C	WDA 10	WDA 12	WDA 14D	WDA 14S	WDA 15	WDA 16	WDA 17	WDA 18
1. Total Participants Served		2,684		17	388	187	94	19	185	34	235	21
1a. Total Participants Exited		1,176		5	207	78	52	8	95	12	104	1
Gender	2a. Male	1,348	50.2%	13	141	108	66	11	99	25	105	11
	2b. Female	1,325	49.4%	4	241	79	28	8	86	9	129	10
	2c. Did Not Self-Identify	11	0.4%	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Age	3a. 14 - 15	758	28.2%	0	223	32	40	0	23	9	190	0
	3b. 16 -17	972	36.2%	9	135	51	34	4	65	14	38	13
	3c. 18	386	14.4%	5	18	33	6	1	22	5	0	7
	3d. 19 - 21	412	15.4%	2	11	52	14	9	43	6	7	1
	3e. 22 - 24	158	5.9%	1	1	19	0	5	32	0	0	0
Ethnicity / Race	4a. Hispanic/Latino	304	11.3%	3	30	17	11	3	24	5	16	2
	4b. American Indian or Alaska Native	95	3.5%	0	17	1	5	0	7	2	2	0
	4c. Asian or Pacific Islander	121	4.5%	0	14	4	5	1	29	1	3	0
	4d. Black or African American	782	29.1%	2	241	53	15	7	97	3	149	5
	4e. White	1,358	50.6%	12	17	93	61	9	30	25	59	15
	4f. Multi Race	166	6.2%	0	34	19	0	1	14	0	9	1
Education Level	5a. Grades K-12 (No Diploma/GED)	2,214	82.5%	16	368	148	91	9	119	32	235	20
	5b. High School graduate or equivalent	365	13.6%	1	20	30	1	6	49	1	0	1
	5c. Post-Secondary Education	104	3.9%	0	0	9	2	4	17	1	0	0
Other Demographics	6. Limited English Proficient	171	6.4%	0	18	12	0	3	30	1	53	0
	7. Youth From Families Receiving Public Assistance	1,684	62.7%	9	367	101	39	10	125	18	202	15
	8. Foster Youth	127	4.7%	2	1	3	4	0	4	0	5	2
	9. Youth with a Disability	1,266	47.2%	16	68	101	51	6	48	22	60	20
	10. High School Drop-Out	140	5.2%	0	0	9	0	0	13	0	0	0
	11. Offender	157	5.8%	0	1	15	0	1	15	2	1	1
	12. Pregnant or Parenting Youth	165	6.1%	1	1	9	1	3	12	0	1	0
	13. Basic Skills Deficient	776	28.9%	11	2	23	43	3	45	12	20	5
	14. Homeless or Runaway Youth	119	4.4%	0	3	16	3	1	25	1	1	0
	15. Not Employed at Program Enrollment	2,208	82.3%	16	388	149	46	11	147	19	232	19
PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE												
1. Received Education/Job Training Activities		1,491	55.6%	1		187		19	72		235	
2. Received Work Experience Activities		1,712	63.8%	4	364	114	76	6	111	30	235	21
3. Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities		431	16.1%			1	75		5	28	235	
4. Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities		1,779	66.3%	13	22	196	9	16	195	10	235	21
5. Received Mentoring Activities		460	17.1%						3		235	
6. Received Support Services		225	8.4%	0	0	10	19	17	30	0	2	2
INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE (Based on Number of Exiters)												
1. Attained Work Readiness or Education Goals in ISS		1,145	97.4%	5	207	65	52	7	86	12	104	1
2. Received Academic/Service Learning Credit		857	72.9%	3	207	32	52	7	26	12	104	1
3. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, or Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Drop-out-Returned to School		857	72.9%	4	207	78	52	2	52	12	104	1
4. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military or Entered Employment		371	31.5%	0	0	49	0	5	23	0	0	0
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION												
1. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Excellent"		269	42.9%			6	10				92	
2. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Very Good"		256	40.8%			2	16				100	
3. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Average"		87	13.9%			2	9				26	
4. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Below Average"		8	1.3%			0	0				1	
5. Number of Participants Rating MYP Experience as "Poor"		7	1.1%			0	1				4	
6. Total Number of Surveys Completed		627		0	0	10	36	0	0	0	223	0

Minnesota Youth Program - Return on Investment Information

State Fiscal Years 2020 & 2021 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021)

Minnesota Youth Program (SFY '20)	<i>WDA DATA</i>
A. Unduplicated Count of MYP Enrollees	2,934
B. Total number of MYP termed	1,538
C. Total number of MYP terminees that returned to school	1,055
D. Total number of MYP terminees that were placed in jobs	329
E. Average wage at placement for MYP placements	\$ 12.25
F. Average number of hours per week for MYP placements	30
G. Total number of MYP placed in work experience	1,525
H. Average wage for those MYP placed in work experience	\$ 12.25
I. Average number of hours per week for MYP work experience	35
J. Total MYP expenses for the program year	\$ 577,125
K. Total Annual Wages Earned by MYP Participants	\$ 10,210,253
L. Total Government Taxes Paid (est at 26.6%)	\$ 2,715,927
M. Est. Welfare Savings on Placements (Avg. \$6835)	\$ 2,248,715
N. Total Annual Return to Government	\$ 4,964,642
O. Positive Termination Rate	95.7%
P. Entered Employment Rate	21.4%
Q. Return on Investment	\$ 8.60
Minnesota Youth Program (SFY '21)	<i>WDA DATA</i>
A. Unduplicated Count of MYP Enrollees	2,684
B. Total number of MYP termed	1,176
C. Total number of MYP terminees that returned to school	1,079
D. Total number of MYP terminees that were placed in jobs	349
E. Average wage at placement for MYP placements	\$ 13.98
F. Average number of hours per week for MYP placements	33
G. Total number of MYP placed in work experience	1,511
H. Average wage for those MYP placed in work experience	\$ 10.00
I. Average number of hours per week for MYP work experience	35
J. Total MYP expenses for the program year	\$ 577,125
K. Total Annual Wages Earned by MYP Participants	\$ 11,545,498
L. Total Government Taxes Paid (est at 26.6%)	\$ 3,071,103
M. Est. Welfare Savings on Placements (Avg. \$6835)	\$ 2,385,415
N. Total Annual Return to Government	\$ 5,456,518
O. Positive Termination Rate	94.2%
P. Entered Employment Rate	29.7%
Q. Return on Investment	\$ 9.45
Minnesota Youth Program (SFY '20 & '21)	<i>WDA DATA</i>
A. Unduplicated Count of MYP Enrollees	5,618
B. Total number of MYP termed	2,714
C. Total number of MYP terminees that returned to school	2,134
D. Total number of MYP terminees that were placed in jobs	678
E. Average wage at placement for MYP placements	\$ 13.12
F. Average number of hours per week for MYP placements	31.5
G. Total number of MYP placed in work experience	3,036
H. Average wage for those MYP placed in work experience	\$ 11.13
I. Average number of hours per week for MYP work experience	35.0
J. Total MYP expenses for the biennium	\$ 1,154,250
K. Total Annual Wages Earned by MYP Participants	\$ 21,755,751
L. Total Government Taxes Paid (est at 26.6%)	\$ 5,787,030
M. Est. Welfare Savings on Placements (Avg. \$6384)	\$ 4,634,130
N. Total Annual Return to Government	\$ 10,421,160
K. Positive Termination Rate	95.2%
L. Entered Employment Rate	25.0%
M. Return on Investment	\$ 9.03