



MinneKIDS Act

Rice County: MinneKIDS Local Affiliate Blueprint

Our Why?

We know that encouraging our youth to think about their future early on is crucial for their success. A CSA program can support this by offering incentives tied to key milestones, such as regular school attendance, participating in enrichment activities, and engaging in career planning during high school. A CSA program can foster equity and inclusion within our community. Many of our families, especially those from low-income backgrounds, face financial barriers to saving for their children's futures. A CSA can address these disparities by offering catch-up bonuses or higher deposits to students who may not have the same financial resources as others. We want to ensure that our programs are accessible to all, regardless of family income, so that every child in our community has a fair chance to succeed. By tailoring the program to meet the specific needs of our diverse population—including addressing savings habits in our Hispanic community and navigating issues around interest for Muslim families—we can promote financial equity in a meaningful way.

Our community also sees the CSA as a way to foster identity formation in our youth. By empowering them to make financial decisions and encouraging habits like saving for the future, we can help them build lifelong skills that will benefit them well beyond their education. The program can be designed to fit the unique characteristics of our community: for instance, in some areas we may need to focus more on college-readiness, while in others we could emphasize career-readiness. This flexibility will allow us to meet the varied needs of our local workforce, ensuring that our youth are well-prepared to contribute to the community in the future.

Community Goals

Our community's primary goal is to foster identity formation and empowerment for all families, ensuring that every child, regardless of background or economic status, has the resources and support to develop a strong sense of self and purpose in their educational and career pursuits. By encouraging early savings through a CSA program, we aim to cultivate a culture where families can confidently invest in their children's futures. This financial investment is not just about saving money; it is also about instilling values of aspiration and ambition. By supporting children in recognizing their potential, we can help break the cycle of poverty and equip them with the confidence they need to pursue their chosen pathways whether that be college, trade school, or direct entry into the workforce. Another key goal is to promote equity and inclusion across our community. We recognize the disparities that exist, particularly among low-income families, communities of color, and immigrant families. Our goal is to design a program that closes these gaps by offering tailored incentives, like catch-up bonuses or higher deposits for low-income students, and ensuring that the program is accessible to all, regardless of family status. We want to create a system that supports educational and career readiness while building lifelong habits that benefit our youth and strengthen our local workforce.

MinneKIDS Program Design

> PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

- All children born on or after program start date: July 1, 2026
- Resident of Minnesota

> ENROLLMENT

- Automatic enrollment, with opt out option
- At-birth enrollment, within 60-90 days after birth using birth records

> INITIAL SEED DEPOSIT

- \$50 for all children
- \$100 for all children from low-income backgrounds

> INCENTIVE DEPOSITS

State-funded, key cradle-to-graduation milestones and for engagement with CSA

> COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING PROGRAM

Centralized statewide
MinneKIDS brand

> MINNEKIDS LOCAL COMMUNITY GRANTS

- MinneKIDS Start Up Grants
- MinneKIDS Expansion Grants

> ACCOUNT VEHICLE

MN SAVES - 529 Account

> PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Minnesota Office of
Higher Education

> ALLOWABLE USES OF SAVINGS

- MN SAVES Qualifying Expenses:
- Tuition at accredited colleges, universities, community colleges, and technical schools
 - Fees, books, supplies, and equipment
 - Room and board
 - School technology
 - Special needs services

> TOTAL APPROPRIATION / FUNDING

TBD, ~\$16-18 million state legislative appropriation per biennium

Local Incentive Deposit Structures

	INCENTIVE DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	HOW OFTEN?	ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY GOAL
Parent Education	ABE & ECFE Attendance	\$50	Annually	Equity & Inclusion as well as Kindergarten Readiness
School Conferences	Parents attending elementary school conferences	\$50	Annually	Identify Formation as well as Academic Benchmarks and School Attendance
Use of Navigators	HCI-Hosted Navigator Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TORCH • Fairbault RISE • NCCC • Northfield ECN • Northfield FEN 	\$50	Per-Program	Equity & Inclusion as well as Academic Benchmarks and School Attendance
Financial Literacy	Youth or Adult	\$50	One-Time Each	Identify Formation
Enrichment in MS	Salesforce rosters cover community school, etc.	\$50	Annually	Identify Formation as well as Academic Benchmarks and School Attendance
Career Planning in HS	Salesforce rosters cover community school, etc.	\$50	Annually	Identify Formation

Local Communication & Marketing

To ensure that families are aware of their opportunity to contribute to the accounts, information about the CSA program and the benefits of contributing will be disseminated through local schools, where parents can receive updates during conferences and through district newsletters. At the start of the program, we will leverage public media outlets, including newspapers, radio, and television, to reach a broader audience. By using these diverse channels, we aim to ensure that all families are informed and engaged, empowering them to take an active role in building their children’s financial futures.

Local Programming

LOCAL PROGRAMMING STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY GOAL(S)
Adult Basic Education	ABE students are working towards a high school credential, learning English, improving basic skills such as literacy and math, and/ or preparing for post-secondary education or employment.	Equity & Inclusion as well as Kindergarten Readiness
Early Childhood Family Education	ECFE is a parenting education program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten entrance. Local programming includes ECFE On The Go and mobile programming.	Identify Formation as well as Academic Benchmarks and School Attendance
School Conferences	Faribault Public Schools and Northfield Public Schools	Equity & Inclusion as well as Kindergarten Readiness
TORCH	The mission of TORCH is to support and empower students in graduating from high school and pursuing future goals, with an intentional focus on partnering with Northfield's students of color, youth from low income families, and first-generation college attendees.	Identify Formation as well as Academic Benchmarks and School Attendance
RISE (Faribault)	RISE is a student-centered program that strives to eliminate barriers and foster healthy learning. They are focused on serving students of color, low-income youth, and first-generation college students. RISE provides tutoring, academic advising, and social-emotional resources for a successful middle and high school experience.	Equity & Inclusion as well as Kindergarten Readiness
Northfield Community College Collaborative	The mission of the Northfield Community College Collaborative (NCCC) is to provide a quality and accessible local community college option with support services that empower all students in Northfield to reach their college potential.	Identify Formation as well as Academic Benchmarks and School Attendance
Early Childhood Navigators	Helping families with children under age five (prior to kindergarten entrance) navigate opportunities and resources, including early childhood screening and preschool enrollment.	Equity & Inclusion as well as Kindergarten Readiness
Family Engagement Navigators (Rice County)	The Family Engagement Navigators initiative uses the evidence-based Attendance Works model to advance student success and help close equity gaps by reducing chronic absence.	Identify Formation as well as Academic Benchmarks and School Attendance
Community Schools (Northfield and Faribault)	Using public schools as hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of support and opportunities to children, youth and families. A full-service community school is both a school and a community resource, with an integrated focus on academics, health, social services, youth development and community engagement. This leads to a better learning environment for all students, stronger families and a healthier community.	Equity & Inclusion as well as Kindergarten Readiness

Outreach and Engagement - Local

- **Community Engagement Events:** We will plug into existing community engagement events, such as Evenings in the Park, Family Friend Neighborhood network meetings, and Community School programming. These events will provide opportunities for families to learn about the CSA program, ask questions, and engage with program coordinators.
- **Collaboration with local schools is a cornerstone of our outreach strategy.** We plan to work closely with teachers and administrators to integrate information about the MinneKIDS CSA program into school activities and parent-teacher conferences. Schools will distribute informational materials to ensure that parents understand the benefits of the program and how they can get involved.
- **Recognizing the importance of inclusivity,** our outreach efforts will include targeted initiatives to engage diverse communities within our area, particularly the Hispanic and Somali populations. We will partner with local organizations and community leaders to disseminate information in multiple languages and ensure that families are informed.

Local Capacity and Funding

Rice County benefits from the presence of the Healthy Community Initiative (HCI), a well-established backbone agency that is uniquely equipped to support communications, local data collection, and collaboration among stakeholders. HCI's **existing infrastructure**, including service contracts and data-sharing agreements with both school district and agencies responsible for family engagement, ensures a strong foundation for outreach, engagement, programming, and coordination.

HCI's **established partnerships** are another significant asset. Through collaborations with the Rice County Ready for K Coalition and the Northfield Racial and Ethnic Equity Collaborative, the initiative has access to diverse perspectives and input without requiring the creation of new governance structures or additional meetings. These coalitions already provide strategic guidance, ensuring that the project aligns with the needs and priorities of the community.

In terms of local and private funding, the primary need lies in **securing sustainable resources to support the initiative's operations and programming**. Funding will be required to sustain core staffing positions such as outreach and engagement coordinators and administrative support, which are critical for maintaining momentum and expanding reach. Marketing and communication efforts, including the production of materials and digital campaigns, also represent a significant expense. Community gatherings and events designed to foster engagement and support milestone attainment will require additional funding for materials, hosting, and other operational costs. Infrastructure expenses, such as technology for data collection and reporting, as well as occasional space rental or equipment purchases, will need to be accounted for in the overall budget.

To address these funding needs, the initiative can leverage a combination of local businesses, philanthropic organizations, and community contributions. Local businesses may provide support through sponsorships, while HCI's expertise in grant writing can be utilized to secure funding from regional and national foundations. Philanthropic organizations with a focus on education, racial equity, or family services represent ideal funding partners. Milestone organizations themselves can allocate portions of their budgets to contribute to programming and engagement efforts. By developing a multi-year funding strategy and diversifying funding sources, Rice County can ensure the sustainability and long-term impact of this initiative, building on the strong foundation provided by HCI and its existing partnerships.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE FUNDED ANNUALLY?	HOW MUCH ANNUALLY?	WHO MAY BE ABLE TO FUND?	NOTES
Staffing - 1FTE + Fringe	\$95,000	All items here are dependent on how extensive state support is for the project and the exact program structure.	The MinneKIDS Local Affiliate Implementation grants could support these local costs.
Communications	\$6,000		
Salesforce	\$10,000		
Admin	\$15,000		
Mileage	\$2,000		
Annual Deposits	\$60,000		
TOTAL	\$188,000		

About our Community

This program would reach children born in Rice County and those who attend school in the Northfield and Faribault Public School Districts.

- Rice County is a rural setting with two primary population centers, Northfield and Faribault.
- Both communities are predominantly White with large Hispanic populations. Faribault has a large percentage of first- and second-generation Somali families.
- Northfield is predominantly white-collar with a democratic representative. Its core employers are two private colleges, Carleton and St. Olaf.
- Faribault has a large blue-collar workforce with republican representatives and senators. Its core employers are Jennie-O, Daikin, Faribault Foods, and Met-Con.

Both Northfield and Faribault are committed to providing flexible, tailored support to help youth succeed in their educational journeys and reach their full potential. However, the needs and challenges of each community are unique, and a solution that is effective in one may not be equally successful in the other. It is essential to design programs that are adaptable and responsive to the specific circumstances and goals of each community, ensuring that all youth receive the support they need to thrive. Shared cradle-to-career benchmarks have been established in both Northfield and Faribault.

MinneKIDS Local Design Table

NAME	ORGANIZATION	ROLE
Jennyfer Barrientos	Growing Up Healthy	Director
Erin Bailey	Northfield Public Schools	Name
Joy Riggs	Healthy Community Initiative	Communications
Meleah Follen	Northfield Community College Collaborative	Director
Zach Pruitt	Faribault Public Schools	Community Education
Sudi Muhidin	Faribault Public Schools	Family & Community Engagement
Katia Barrott	Faribault Public Schools	Family & Community Engagement
Candace Godfrey	Healthy Community Initiative	Operations
Laura Hakala	Northfield Community College Collaborative	Navigator
Becky Ford	Community Action Center	Community Resource Manager