

# Greater Twin Cities United Way Direct Appropriation

Legislative Report

12/13/2024

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## Program Overview

For this project, grants will be awarded through an invitation only application to partnerships providing workforce training using the career pathways model that helps students gain work experience, earn experience in high-demand fields, and transition into family-sustaining careers. We anticipate grant sizes will range between $30,000-$50,000 per organization or partnership of organizations providing workforce opportunities. Fairness will be ensured through a rigorous and equitable review process, seeking continued feedback from community, and intentionally ensuring that a diversity of geographies, industries and communities are served through this process.

## Legislative Appropriation

Funds for this project are appropriated in [Minnesota Session Laws - 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 53 S.F. 3035, Article 20, Sec. 2., Subdivision 3(rr)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/53/). The amount available to Greater Twin Cities United Way for SFY 2024 is **$500,000**. DEED is permitted to retain up to 5% of the $500,000 appropriation for administration and monitoring of the grant. Therefore, $475,000 was available to Greater Twin Cities United Way.

## Allowable Use of Funds

In accordance with the language appropriating these funds directs Greater Twin Cities United Way to make grants to partner organizations to provide workforce training using career pathways model that helps students gain work experience, earn experience in high-demand fields, and transition into family-sustaining careers. The grants will be targeted statewide.

## Program Activities and Performance Metrics

For this grant, the Greater Twin Cities United Way will leverage Career Academies. Career Academies educational programming is sequenced and stackable career-connected learning opportunities in in-demand career pathways. Coursework includes both the required and preparatory academic experiences that ladder into and through college programming. In addition to the academic programming, career connected courses will be offered to all students. These courses are offered as a part of approved rigorous programs of study within career and technical education consortia at the high school or their related college program partners. Additionally, on the job learning experiences are prioritized through formal internships, and informal pathway connected job experiences.

A critical part of a successful career pathways strategy is high-quality work experiences for youth that are individualized to a student’s unique passions and lived experiences. Funded organizations and partnerships will be made of a combination of institutions and community organizations that work together to provide supportive and student-centered work experiences. Examples might include partnerships made up of local intermediaries, chambers of commerce, school districts or high schools or youth employment partners. Working together, these innovative partnerships can offer supportive, developmentally appropriate work experiences that are in line with high-wage and high-demand career fields. The work experiences supported might include supportive components like mentorship, career coaching, culturally specific approaches, and wrap around supports to ensure participation and enrollment of students from a diversity of backgrounds.

The following entities were contracted with to provide services as indicated in the appropriating language:

* Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce
* Burnsville Chamber of Commerce
* Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce
* Fergus Falls Chamber of Commerce
* Greater Mankato Growth, Inc.
* Lakeville Chamber of Commerce
* MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce
* Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce
* Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism
* Shakopee Area Chamber of Commerce
* Winona Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation

## Expenditure Data

The SFY 24 grant contract started on July 1, 2023 and will end on June 30, 2025. The cost category breakdown of expenditures is reported below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Budget Category | Expenditures |
| Administration (up to 10% allowed) | $47,500.00 |
| Contracted Services | $427,500.00 |
| **Total** | **$475,000.00** |

## Program Data and Outcomes

The data included in this report reflects youth served during State Fiscal Year 2024.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DATA ON PARTICIPANTS SERVED – INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -** (Cumulative for the SFY) | | | |
| **Total Individual Participants Served** | | 995 | |
| **Gender** | A. Female |  | 377 |
| B. Male |  | 410 |
| C. Other |  |  |
| D. Prefer not to answer |  | 208 |
| **Age** | 1. 14 and under |  | 0 |
| 1. 14 – 15 |  | 5 |
| B. 16 – 17 |  | 435 |
| D. 18 – 21 |  | 386 |
| E. 22 – 24 |  | 0 |
| **Ethnicity / Race** | A. Hispanic/Latino |  | 45 |
| B. American Indian or Alaska Native |  | 1 |
| C. Asian/Pacific Islander |  | 11 |
| D. Black or African American |  | 91 |
| E. White |  | 508 |
| F. Multiracial |  | 45 |
| G. Not Disclosed |  | 297 |
| **Education Level** | 8th Grade, or under |  | 0 |
| 9th Grade -12th Grade |  | 995 |
| High School graduate or equivalent |  | 0 |
| Post-Secondary Education |  | 0 |
| **Other Demographics** | 1. Limited English Proficient |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Participant/Family Receiving Public Assistance |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Foster Youth |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Participants with a Disability |  | Not Collected |
| 1. High School Drop-Out |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Youth or Adult Offender |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Pregnant or Parenting Youth |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Basic Skills Deficient |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Homeless Individual or Runaway Youth |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Not Employed at Program Enrollment |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Veteran |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Economically Disadvantaged |  | Not Collected |
| **PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -** (Cumulative for the SFY) | | | |
| 1. Received Education, Employment Preparation, or Work Readiness/Job Training Activities (Includes Training in ABE/Remedial, Basic Skills, Classroom, Labor Market Info, Life Skills, and Occupational Skills) | |  | 995 |
| 1. Received Work Experience, Internship, or Apprenticeship Activities | |  | 995 |
| 1. Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Received Mentoring Activities | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Received Support Services | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Received Financial Literacy Education | |  | Not Collected |
| **INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -** (Cumulative for the SFY) | | | |
| 1. Attained Work Readiness Goals | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Attained Education Goals | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Received Academic Credit or Service-Learning Credit | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Dropout - Returned to School | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Entered employment | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Retained employment, increased wages or advanced career | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Completed Program Objective | |  | Not Collected |
| **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FOR PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -** (Cumulative for the SFY) | | | |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Excellent” | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Very Good” | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Average” | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Below Average” | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Poor” | |  | Not Collected |
| 1. Total Number of Surveys Completed | |  | Not Collected |

## Success Stories

**Redwood Area Chamber of Commerce**

Redwood Area Chamber said FRWF is helping the partnership fill a need for more Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) at the local nursing home and assisted living facility. Over the past year and a half, there have been some CNA training offerings, usually after school or in the evening. FRWF funding allowed the chamber to boost the partnership and open the door for discussions about how to improve the program. As a result, students will be able to take a credit-bearing CNA class during the school day starting in second semester of the 2024-25 school year.

**Greater Mankato Growth, Inc.**

Greater Mankato Growth (GMG) said one of their Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) had the highest number of sign-ups for internships ever during the past quarter. Because of FRWF, Greater Mankato Growth had the relationships and partnerships to ensure all interested students from East and West High Schools were placed in a formal internship with employers. GMG is working on ongoing efforts to create more annually recurring programs and engage more employers in the district, both of which will help ensure they can continue to meet the demand. In the future, GMG hopes to expand the program to Central High School.

GMG is also using FRWF funding to develop video content about the district’s Career & Technical Education program. These videos, which have been discussed in previous reports, will highlight what the district is doing to prepare students for work experiences and the employer role in helping students be successful in those experiences.

**Fergus Falls Chamber of Commerce**

Fergus Falls identified an unanticipated outcome when they used the grant funds to offer wage reimbursement for youth interns in high demand, high wage jobs. The wage reimbursement allowed a business partner from a local cafe to staff up more than what the owner needed. Because of the higher staffing levels, the owner was able to spend more one-on-one time with employees and provide coaching in workplace soft skills. For example, one youth employee missed a family celebration because they didn’t know how to ask for time off. The cafe owner identified this as a teaching opportunity and provided coaching to all the youth workers about how to ask for time off, including things like working on eye contact when asking for time off.

**Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce**

Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce has previously reported that the FRWF grant has supported the creation of new positions in the area. Among the newly created positions is a paid teaching assistant role for bilingual Faribault C2C Career Academy high school youth. Teaching assistants work with Faribault’s new-to-country students, many of whom have very limited English skills. Because the vast majority of Faribault’s teaching staff does not speak Spanish or Somali, these teaching assistant positions are “vital links in connecting these new students with their teachers, school, and learning,” while also providing paid experience in the education field.  As one of the supervising teachers noted this quarter:

“It has been marvelous to have [the Academy student – name withheld for confidentiality]. It’s immensely beneficial to [the new-to-county students], but it has been helpful to all my students. It helps to open up access and to provide additional support. [Academy student] is incredibly respectful and a real joy to work with.” - Faribault C2C Career Academy supervising teacher

**Lakeville Chamber of Commerce**

In Q2, 27 students completed the 20-hour work based learning and exploration summer program. In Q3, Lakeville Chamber of Commerce has been working on placing students in a 20-hour internship placement based on the preferences students identified during the summer program. Some students have completed their internships and others will be completed this semester. The chamber hired one of the interns who was interested in marketing. The intern has been working on the chamber’s social media, including producing videos from events.

**Owatonna Chamber of Commerce**

Owatonna Chamber of Commerce shared an example of how FRWF helped them to better support students and local business partners. The partnership had one student who came in with a work experience that wasn’t a good fit for the student or employer. Rather than force an unsuccessful placement or give up on the student, Owatonna identified a small local manufacturer that was a better fit for the student. This led to a better work experience for the student and a stronger partnership with local businesses.

**Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce/Bridges**

Brainerd Lakes said FRWF allowed them to leverage long-time involvement with Lakes Area Manufacturing Alliance (LAMA), Chamber and Bridges Workplace Connection to build up interest in manufacturing careers through internships. In spring 2024, the partnership offered a Career Exploration Day for 3,500 middle and high school students. During the event over 500+ students participated in the production and assembly of products made by materials from 8 different manufacturers to create a gift to take home. In October 2024, over 200 students participated in manufacturing tours at companies around the area. As a result of the work, eight companies signed up to offer a combined total of 40-50 internships. As of October 2024, four students signed up for a fall internship. In summer 2025, Bridges Workplace Connection will add the manufacturing summer camp for 8th and 9th grade students to their camp schedule of offerings.

Partnership Success: Most chambers said FRWF was one of the simplest, most well-supported grants they have worked with. They appreciated that GTCUW is looking for the best ways to use the funding and is flexible within the program constraints. They said future grant recipients should work with GTCUW to find ways to use the funds to best meet the needs of their communities.