

# Career Pathways Pilot Project (CP3)

WIOA Governor’s Reserve Funds

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## Career Pathways Pilot Project (CP3) Overview

The Career Pathways Pilot Project (CP3) was developed with the support of PY2018 and PY2019 WIOA Youth Governor’s Reserve Funds. A total of $500,000 WIOA Youth Set-Aside funding was allocated to support Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to develop and expand Career Pathways Sector engagement. The CP3 opportunity prioritized LWDBs that focused on diverse career pathways in Information Technology (IT), manufacturing, and healthcare. LWDBs applied for up to $250,000 with a one-year grant period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The State of Minnesota encouraged co-enrollment and blending and braiding of funds with Federal WIOA Youth as well as the State-funded Minnesota Youth Program (MYP). LWDBs were required to partner with at least one community-based organization, local education agency, and employer willing to hire and engage youth. The age requirements of the CP3 project aligned with WIOA Youth: 16–24-year-olds who are underrepresented in Minnesota’s workforce. Funding priorities included LWDBs that serving youth of color, youth with disabilities, young women, and young veterans. Lastly, LWDBs were required to provide paid work experiences and training opportunities that led to industry recognized credentials in Information Technology, manufacturing, and healthcare industries.

## COVID-19 Impact

The CP3 Request for Proposals (RFP) was released in February 2020, with proposals due at the end of March 2020. The release date of the RFP and the subsequent awarding of grants coincided directly with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Shortly after awarding the CP3 grants, youth employment programs shifted to online and virtual formats given the various state and federal health-related restrictions. The four LWDBs implementing CP3 projects requested extensions on the grants and all contracts were extended. All CP3 funds were fully expended by June 30, 2022.

## Allowable Activities and Expenditures

The following activities are allowable uses of funds under the CP3 program:

* Wages and/or stipends paid for participation in paid work experience;
* Staff time working to identify and develop the work experience opportunity, including staff time spent working with employers to identify and develop the work experience, including virtual work experiences;
* Staff time recruiting youth for programming;
* Staff time working with employers to ensure a successful work experience, including staff time spent managing the work experience;
* Staff time evaluating the work experience;
* Participant and employer (worksite supervisor) work experience orientation sessions;
* Incentive payments directly tied to the successful completion of work experience or education/training. ***Note: LWBD’s must have an incentive policy in place.***
* Employability skills and job readiness training to prepare youth for a work experience;
* Supportive services such as gas cards or equipment needed for work experience;
* Virtual trainings through platforms like Coursera are allowed during the COVID-19 pandemic;
* Activities provided in accordance with the 14 WIOA Youth Program elements.

WIOA Youth policies apply to the CP3 project. These policies can be found here: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp>.

## Project Descriptions and Success Stories

***Southwest Private Industry Council (Marshal, MN) and Minnesota Valley Action Council/South Central Workforce Council (Mankato, MN), $250,000*** - The Minnesota Region 5 LWDB CP3 project helped eliminate the barriers contributing to economic disparities by supporting youth to 1) complete their high school education, or equivalent 2) provide work readiness skills training to prepare youth for the world of work 3) provide rich labor market information on high-growth, in-demand occupations so youth are aware of real, local career opportunities, and 4) provide hands on learning through training, work experience and career counseling services to help youth identify career goals and the career pathway to that career.  This unique culturally appropriate project served youth from the Lower Sioux Indian Community and local school districts with higher concentrations of youth of color. The project provides youth high quality training leading to industry recognized credentials in healthcare, manufacturing, information technology and construction with hands-on work experience opportunities.  Local contact: South Central WDA Director Heather Gleason, hgleason@workforcecouncil.org and Southwest WDA Director Carrie Bendix, cbendix@swmnpic.org.

**Success Story:**

*Leaders of the Lower Sioux Indian Community (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 (Pathways) Program was developed. In partnership, the programs were designed in cooperation with LSIC rather than for their members. Construction projects within the community were selected to master the curriculum and support the improvement of the Community including sheds and patios for their elders. The LSIC has been awarded a HUD grant in which the goal is to build 10 green homes in the Community. Beginning in October of 2020, nine students fully participated in the education program at the Lower Sioux Community and successfully received a Carpentry Certificate (19 college credits) from Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Seven students graduated with the Carpentry Certificate from Minnesota West Community and Technical College. This project went so well, a Plumbing program is now offered.*

***Workforce Development, Inc. (Rochester), $190,000*** *-* Youth in Southeast Minnesota received intensive, work-based learning experiences from Workforce Development, Inc. through pre-and concurrent work experience skills training, mentoring, partnerships with a wide array of community partners and access to career pathways programming. Those who were enrolled in the Southeast Minnesota CP3 program are prepared for a stronger future for themselves and their families. Strategies for implementation included: educating community partners and education entities about the program; Employer Outreach Specialists connecting with area employers; partnering with educators to develop a core essential skills curriculum; recruiting participants with the support of education entities and local community organizations through word of mouth and current customers; and hosting job club discussions to connect youth with others with similar work experiences. Local contact: WDA Director Jinny Rietmann, jrietmann@wdimn.org.

**Success Story:**

*Autasha began working with WDI she had an 11th grade education and never finished high school. WDI connected her with Hawthorne Adult Education in order to pursue her GED and was able to pay for Autasha’s GED tests. After she earned her GED, WDI worked with Autasha to help her explore her interest in the human services field. No one in her family has ever gone to college, so her youth career planner helped her transition into post-secondary by getting her signed up to take college prep classes at Hawthorne, assisted her with the FAFSA & applying to RCTC, and setting up meetings with the social work program advisor at RCTC. Autasha began taking classes for the social work transfer pathway at RCTC part-time and also started a new job as a direct support professional in order to help support herself while she was in school. Autasha was recently promoted to a lead direct support professional and has paused on her classes due to Covid-19. She is currently working full time plans to return to school part-time in the fall of 2021 to continue her goal of earning her college degree.*

***Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (Monticello), $60,000*** - Addresses economic disparities and higher unemployment rates experienced by youth with disabilities, youth of color, young women, and young veterans within Economic Development Region 7E (Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, and Pine counties). Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. will provide the Central Minnesota Career Pathways Pilot Program (CM CP3). Starting with assessment and career pathway awareness, this program collaborated with local employers and education entities to combine work-based learning with classroom training and stackable credentials. The project focused on careers in manufacturing, healthcare and information technology. Community organizations were engaged to help meet the support service needs of participants.  Local contact: WDA Director Barbara Chaffee, bchaffee@cmjts.org and Diana Ristamaki, dristamaki@cmjts.org

**Success Story:**

*Tomisz began working with Youth Employment Specialist Mel in April 2020, while he was a junior at Hutchinson High School. Over the course of the following 8 months, Tomisz and Mel met virtually over Zoom to work on various workplace readiness topics. Through this career exploration, Tomisz narrowed down his career interests to automotive repair and computer programming. In November 2020, he enrolled with Youth Employment Specialist Mel in several programs provided by CMJTS, (WIOA ISY, MYP, Youth at Work, and CP3) and in December 2020, began a paid Work Experience Placement at Car Shop, Inc. in Hutchinson. Not only did Tomisz gain hands-on experience in the automotive repair career field, he also earned academic credits for his employment there. Tomisz successfully completed his Work Experience Placement at Car Shop, Inc. in May 2021 and although he loved the experience and the opportunity, he decided that the automotive repair industry isn’t where his passion lies. Tomisz graduated from Hutchinson High School in June 2021 and worked with Mel for post-secondary planning. He will begin the next step in his education journey with Ridgewater College in Fall 2021 – studying Computer Programming. Tomisz has also secured independent employment with Millerbernd Manufacturing Company at $13.00 an hour to help him save for education costs!*

## Evaluation of CP3 Project

One of the primary goals of the CP3 project was to provide supplemental WIOA funding that would allow for increased services to WIOA eligible youth, increase diverse partnerships with local business community, and increased partnerships with tribal governments. These qualitative goals were achieved in various ways by each of the four LWDBs that received Governor’s Reserve Funds. The following information provides an evaluation of the Governor’s Reserve Funds project.

### Increased Services to Youth

The CP3 funds provided valuable resources that allowed the LWDBs to reach additional youth and co-enroll youth into other state and federally funded programs. Co-enrolling youth creates opportunities for youth to participate in paid work experiences, enhanced skill development, and support services to aid with successful program completion. For youth participating in the CP3 grant opportunity, they are able to continue receiving services through WIOA Youth and/or other state funded programs such as the Minnesota Youth Program. CP3 focused on increasing services to youth in rural Minnesota. Notably, the four LWDBs served youth of color higher than the incident in population for rural Minnesota. By prioritizing youth of color in rural Minnesota, the CP3 program helps support Minnesota’s goals to reduce racial disparities among young people. This aligns with the WIOA Youth goals described in Minnesota’s WIOA State Plan. In addition to youth of color, women, who are underrepresented in rural Minnesota’s workforce, were prioritized in this project. This is especially critical as the four LWDBs focused programming on in demand industries that provide career laddering opportunities. These diverse career laddering opportunities help support young women in Minnesota to earn a wage that allows for economic stability. Lastly, youth with disabilities also received services from the CP3 grant that helped Minnesota address employment and education gaps for young people with disabilities. As intended, the CP3 grant opportunity allowed LWDBs to increase service to youth who are underrepresented in the workforce due to race, gender and/or disability status. Reaching these communities is critical to creating and maintaining a strong workforce in Minnesota.

### Increased Business Partnerships

Increasing business partnerships became especially critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to job placements switching to virtual work, the LWDBs leveraged CP3 funding to expand local business partnerships. In the case of Central Minnesota Jobs and Training (CMJTS), staff worked with business partners to develop a mentorship program. Mentoring youth at work sites is a critical component for success and provides youth with a mentor who is also an industry expert. Across all four LWDBs, staff worked closely with businesses who shifted employment needs due to the pandemic. For example, many business partners shifted work opportunities to virtual positions. Partnering with businesses to host youth through virtual work experiences was supported by the CP3 grant funds. Virtual training and career exploration tools were also developed in conjunction with local business partners to ensure that industry requirements and expectations would be met by youth participants in a virtual environment. Expanding partnerships will be sustained through WIOA Youth funds in combination with other state and federal grants. This will be especially important moving forward as Minnesota has one of the lowest adult unemployment rates in the country.

### Increased Partnerships with Tribal Governments

Governor’s Reserve Funds are critical to Minnesota’s workforce development system because the funds allow for increased partnerships with tribal governments/agencies. In the case of Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, the Governor’s Reserve Funds allowed staff and work in collaboration with the Lower Sioux Indian Community. Expanding partnerships supports service delivery to WIOA eligible youth. Co-enrolling and braiding funds across organizations is an important way to ensure youth receive the culturally competent employment and educational resources they need to successfully transition to the adult labor force. This partnership was featured on Minnesota’s Pioneer Public TV and a video describing the impact of the project can be found [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ifqm2m3XcvI). This critical partnership will be sustained beyond the life of the CP3 grant using WIOA Youth funds as well as other state and federal resources.

## Demographic Summary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CP3 Demographic Information** | **Total** | **Percent** |
| 1. **Total Individual Participants Served**
 | **154** |
| 1. **Female**
 | 90 | 58% |
| 1. **Male**
 | 64 | 42% |
| 1. **14 – 15**
 | 7 | 5% |
| 1. **16 – 17**
 | 49 | 32% |
| 1. **18 - 21**
 | 74 | 48% |
| 1. **22 – 24**
 | 24 | 16% |
| 1. **Hispanic/Latino**
 | 34 | 22% |
| 1. **American Indian or Alaska Native**
 | 10 | 7% |
| 1. **Asian/Pacific Islander**
 | 5 | 3% |
| 1. **Black or African American**
 | 21 | 14% |
| 1. **White**
 | 105 | 68% |
| 1. **Multiracial**
 | 4 | 3% |
| 1. **Did not disclose**
 | 8 | 5% |
| 1. **Youth with Disability**
 | 92 | 61% |
| 1. **8th Grade – 12th Grade**
 | 103 | 67% |
| 1. **High School graduate or equivalent**
 | 45 | 30% |
| 1. **Post-Secondary Education**
 | 6 | 4% |

## Program Activities and Performance Outcomes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| **Total Served** | 154 |
| **A.      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)**  | 153 | 99% |
| **B.      Received Work Experience, Internship, or Apprenticeship Activities** | 73 | 47% |
| **C.      Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities** | 0 | 0% |
| **D.      Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities** | 129 | 84% |
| **E.       Received Mentoring Activities** | 41 | 27% |
| **F.       Received Support Services** | 50 | 32% |
| **G.      Received Financial Literacy Education** | 100 | 65% |
| **INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE** |
| **A.      Attained Work Readiness or Education Goals** | 75 | 49% |
| **B.      Received Academic Credit or Service-Learning Credit** | 13 | 8% |
| **C.      Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Dropout - Returned to School** | 128 | 83% |
| **D.      Entered Post-Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military** | 17 | 11% |
| **E.       Entered employment** | 59 | 38% |
| **F.       Retained employment, increased wages or advanced career** | 55 | 36% |
| **G.      Completed Program Objective** | 113 | 73% |

**\*Data is preliminary and will be finalized follow the end of all contracts on June 30, 2022.**