# Minnesota Youth Program Policy Chapter 2 – Allowable Activities

## Summary

This policy provides guidance for the operation of the state-funded Minnesota Youth Program which is available to eligible youth in all 87 counties of Minnesota. The policy describes allowable activities and costs under Minnesota Youth Program.

## Relevant Laws, Rules, or Policies

[Minnesota Statutes 116L.561](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/116l.561)

[Minnesota Statutes 116L.56](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/116L.56)

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## Overview

The Minnesota Youth Program provides organizations with flexibility as it relates to program service delivery models and allowable activities. This policy chapter is intended to provide overarching guidance on activities that are allowed under the Minnesota Youth Program. The type and level of services may vary across providers based on local need and direction from the Local Workforce Development Board/Youth Committee.

## Allowable Activities

The Minnesota Youth Program allows for a broad spectrum of youth employment, education, and training-related activities which should be appropriate to the needs of the youth participant, as the needs of a 14-year-old participant likely will vary greatly from the needs of a 22-year-old. The following list provides examples of the activities that may be funded through the Minnesota Youth Program. **See below for information regarding which services require the participant to have federal work authorization and which services do not require such authorization.** Services may be provided in-person or through virtual methods. Specific questions regarding allowable activities may be directed to the Program Coordinator.

* Career awareness and exploration activities like career aptitude tests, career fairs, industry tours, job shadows, career camps, labor market information seminars
* Resume development, cover letter writing, mock interviews
* Financial literacy training
* Mentoring (adult/participant and peer-to-peer)
* Support in achieving educational goals such as earning academic and/or service-learning credit, academic tutoring, basic skills development
* Support in earning high school diploma or equivalent
* Support with exploring, applying to, and accessing post-secondary education opportunities that lead to industry recognized credentials (i.e. certificate, credential, diploma)
* Work-readiness training
* Occupational skill training
* Tuition, fees, books, and licensing fees (**Minnesota Youth Program funding should be coordinated with any financial aid that may be available to the participant.)**
* Private, public, and non-profit sector work experiences, including internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and On-The- Job Training (OJT) opportunities. See [Work Experiences](#_bookmark5) section for additional details.
* Work-based learning and career pathways programming focused on in-demand industries such as healthcare and information technology. See [Career Pathways](#_bookmark6) section for additional details.
* Supportive services to enable a participant to participate in and complete MYP programming. See [Support Services](#_bookmark7) section for additional details.
* Outreach to Schools activities (see below for more detail on Outreach to Schools)
	+ - Support to complete driver’s education course(s) and/or obtain driver’s license
* Stipends or incentives tied to participation in the Minnesota Youth Program. **See section on Stipends and Incentives** for more details.

**NOTE:** Minnesota Youth Program grant funds can be used to pay for food or meals for participants in very limited circumstances. Grantees are highly encouraged to leverage other funds or partner with other organization to provide food or meals to participants before using MYP funds for food or meals. See [Food or Meals for Minnesota Youth Program Participants](#Food_or_Meals_for_Youth_at_Work_Particip) below.

### Minnesota Youth Program services and activities that do not require work authorization:

1. Labor exchange services such as labor market information, career exploration, career guidance, resume writing assistance, and job search assistance.
2. Information on worker rights and where to find legal assistance.
3. Referrals to community resources such as transportation, childcare support, food assistance, housing assistance, medical assistance, and other similar resources.
4. Individualized services such as career assessments, development of an individual employment plan or individual service strategy, group counseling, one-on-one case management, career planning information on foreign credential evaluation services and on obtaining credit for prior learning.
5. Basic skills education, including English language instruction, and high school equivalency.
6. Assistance in completing paperwork to finalize work authorization.
7. Assistance in applying for an occupational license including the cost of such applications.
8. Outreach to workers regarding the Employment-Related Law Compliant System and processing of such complaints.

### Minnesota Youth Program services and activities that do require work authorization:

1. Job placement
2. Occupational post-secondary training
3. Work experience
4. Supportive services that represent a direct financial benefit such as a voucher or reimbursement, or needs-related payments.

## Outreach to Schools Activities

Outreach to Schools activities may be provided to youth who do not meet the eligibility criteria of MYP (for example a classroom of students at a local school who are not necessarily enrolled in MYP, or a career fair at a local school). 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, including 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.

* Providing opportunities to interact with local business and industry including tours, organizing business and industry speaker panels, job shadowing, and mentoring.

• Providing individual counseling and career exploration including career assessments, resume preparation and job search assistance, and mock interviews.

• Tours of CareerForce locations and information about the resources available and how to access and utilize the resources.

• Connections to community and private sector resources through a local career fair, career event, and tours of businesses in strategic industries.

• Group and individual counseling including instruction and presentations on [CareerOneStop](https://www.careeronestop.org/), labor market information and strategic industries and demand occupations.

• Individualized counseling including career exploration and career assessments, resume preparation, mock interviews, and job search assistance.

## Work Experiences

From Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 20 CFR 681.600):

1. Work experiences are planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate. A work experience may take place in the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act or applicable State law, exists. Work experiences provide the youth participant with opportunities for career exploration and skill development.
2. Work experiences must include academic and occupational education.
3. The types of work experiences include the following categories:
	1. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
	2. Pre-apprenticeship programs;
	3. Internships and job shadowing; and
	4. On-the-job training opportunities as defined in WIOA sec. 3(44) and in § 680.700.

## Career Pathways

From the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):

The term “career pathway” means a combination of high-quality education, training and other services that:

1. align with the skills of industries in the region;
2. prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or post-secondary education options, including registered apprenticeships;
3. includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
4. includes education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
5. organizes education, training and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the education and career advancement of the individual to the greatest extent possible;
6. enables an individual to attain a secondary school or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized post-secondary credential;
7. helps an individual enter or advance with a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

## Supportive Services

The Minnesota Youth Program does notrequire grantees to offer or provide supportive services to youth participants. However, it is generally a best practice to offer supportive services to youth participants to help ensure successful completion of programming.

Supportive services include items that are necessary for a youth to participate in the program, such as transportation, clothing, tools, childcare, housing/rental assistance, school-related expenses, etc. These expenses may be paid directly to the youth or to a third-party vendor, or may be provided through referral to another organization.

Examples of allowable support services include, but are not limited to:

* Linkages to community services
* Assistance with transportation
* Assistance with child care and dependent care
* Assistance with housing
* Needs-related payments that provide financial assistance to participants to enable them to take part in local youth program activities
* Assistance with educational testing (for example, payment of GED testing fees)
* Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities
* Legal aid services
* Referrals to health care
* Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including items such as eyeglasses, protective eye gear and other essential safety equipment
* Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes
* Payments and fees for employment and training related applications, tests, and certifications
* Food, in extremely limited circumstances (discussed further below)

If the MYP provider offers and/or provides supportive services to participants a support services policy **must** be in place. Example Support Services policies can be found here:[**https://mn.gov/deed/programs-**](https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/resources/)[**services/office-youth-development/resources/.**](https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/resources/)

## Food or Meals for Minnesota Youth Program Participants

On a limited basis and in certain situations, food at a reasonable cost may be provided to youth program participants as a supportive service.

* Food provided to all participants at a recruiting event or celebration event, for example, would not be allowed.
* Food **may** be provided to eligible youth when it will assist or enable the participant to participate in allowable youth program activities and to reach their employment and training goals, thereby achieving the program’s overall performance goals.
* Food should be provided in the context of a program activity (for example, an all-day training)

The use of Minnesota Youth Program funds for food must be limited to reasonable and necessary purchases that are coordinated, when possible, with other community, state, or federal resources that that provide food for low-income individuals.

Minnesota Youth Program grantees **must** have written policies and procedures in place for purchasing and distributing food to ensure consistent treatment of these types of expenses. This may be included in the local Support Services policy. The policy must be submitted as part of the Local Youth Plan for approval. An example support services policy can be found here: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/resources/>.

## Use of Stipends and/or Incentives

### Stipends

Grantees are allowed to provide stipends to youth participants. Often, stipends are provided to youth as compensation for their time while they are completing classroom training, on-the-job training, occupational training, or other training activities. If a provider wishes to provide a stipend to youth participants, the provider must have a policy in place that is approved by the local board/youth committee outlining details such as the activities that will qualify for a stipend, the amount of the stipend, when and how it will be paid, etc. Note: stipends are considered taxable income to program participants and participants must be notified of IRS implications.

### Incentives

Incentives may be provided to youth participants for recognition and achievements related to goals in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The local program must have a board-approved policy in place governing the use of incentives outlined in writing before incentives are awarded. Incentive payments must not include entertainment, such as movie, sporting events, tickets, or gift cards to movie theaters or other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment.

Incentive payment must be connected to recognition of achievement of milestones in the program tied to work experience, education, or training. Incentives provided for achievement could include the acquisition of a credential or other successful outcome.

Incentive policies should include type of achievement, paper documentation of achievement, and amount payable. For example:

| Type of Achievement  | Paper Documentation  | Amount Payable  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Completion of GED test (incentive can be offered for **each** test completed)  | Copy of official document showing passed test  | The successful completion of each test = $20.  |

Copies of stipend and incentive policies must be submitted to DEED with the Local Youth Plan.

Example stipend and incentive policies can be found here: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/resources/>