


Cover Sheet

2023 TANF Youth Innovation Project

Applicant Agency: Anoka County Job Training Center 1201 89 th Ave NE – Suite 235 Blaine, MN 55434			
1. Agency Name:	Anoka County Job Training Center		
2. Director Name:	Nicole Swanson	8. Contact Name:	Darcy Hokkanen
3. Telephone:	763-324-2313	9. Telephone:	763-324-2306
4. Fax:	763-324-2292	10. Fax:	763-324-2294
5. Email:	Nicole.swanson@co.anoka.mn.us	11. Email:	Darcy.hokkanen@co.anoka.mn.us
6. Agency Website:	www.anokacounty.mn.us		
7. Address: 1201 89 th Ave NE, Suite 400 Blaine, MN 55434		12. Address: 1201 89 th Ave NE – Suite 235 Blaine, MN 55434	
13. Federal Tax ID: (required)	41-6005752	14. Minnesota Tax ID: (required)	8026263
15. Unique Entity ID (UEI) Number: (required)	M9JRR326F957	16. SWIFT Vendor ID: (if known)	0000195348 001
Required Information:			
17. Project Name:		TANF Innovations 2023 - Anoka	
18. Geographic Area Served:		Anoka County	
19. Number of Participants Served:		20	
20. Project Start Date:		01/01/2023	
21. Project End Date:		12/31/2023	
22. Total Amount of Funding Requested:		\$ 42,500	

I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the applicant.

Authorized Signature 	Title Department Director	Date 12/06/2022
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2023 TANF INNOVATION PROJECT

Narrative Questions:

- 1. Describe the youth service provider's plans to assure collaboration with participants' MFIP Employment Service Providers regarding their Employment Service Plans, as applicable.**

The Job Training Center is the administrative entity in Anoka County for MFIP Employment Services which allows for seamless coordination and collaboration. We collaborate across teams for outreach and recruitment efforts as well as full family service delivery. Career Counselors from both programs work to communicate the opportunities to clients and/or youth in TANF households. We have two staff working with our TANF project. One of the Career Counselors has previous experience with MFIP and understands both programs and can communicate with both teams (Economic Assistance and Employment Services) and has access to joint data in WF1.

Project participants are youth between the ages of 14-18, some may be teen parents on MFIP. For most of our participants, this will be their first opportunity to develop an employment plan with a Career Counselor with the goal of gaining a meaningful work experience in an employment setting (based on their input) and earn money for their efforts.

Effective communication strategies from past projects included:

- Early parental involvement
- Detailed case notes
- Email communications between Career Counselors from the various programs.

Our plan includes regular check-ins with the youth and joint planning sessions to assure that barriers or challenges are addressed, and support services are in place to support the work experience and/or training goals. We also talk to the participants about small successes and their stories of what they feel good about achieving through this project as well as note progress on their employment service plan.

- 2. Describe how the youth service provider will identify and recruit eligible youth for the project. What percentage of participants do you expect to be from communities of color? Describe the youth service provider's plans to incorporate culturally responsive programming approaches when applicable.**

Outreach and marketing efforts will be a collaborative effort. The JTC has a shared client management system which allows us to identify families with youth ages 14-18 in TANF households in Anoka County. Targeted mailings will be used as well as web and printed information.

The JTC Career Counselors partner with our financial workers in Economic Assistance to serve the youth and families that we have in common. The TANF Innovations staff extend invitations frequently to youth/families that are identified as eligible. Each time a new family

is referred to MFIP, the Intake and Eligibility staff email and mail information to the families to provide details about the program. Youth staff also attend MFIP staff meetings to remind them about the program. Quarterly, JTC runs a report that identifies from MAXIS those youth that are potentially eligible. That report is then shared with the MFIP Career Counselors. They are asked to review their caseloads to see which youth are on the list and then reach out to those families.

In addition, the JTC is a recent recipient of a Project Focus grant (Family Opportunity Coordinated Unduplicated Services) through DHS. With this grant, we serve families that are new to the county (residing in the country for less than 36 months) that are on MFIP. The focus of this program is to provide wrap around services for these families to ensure they get the assistance they need. When families are identified from this group, the Career Counselor overseeing Project Focus notifies the Supervisor in the youth program and they receive an individualized overview about the TANF Innovations program with the help of an interpreter. The families are given this information, so they have their youth apply when they are ready to explore work.

Once youth are identified and applications are received, our youth counseling staff reach out on an individual basis to inform the youth about the benefits and the unique opportunities involved in this program. They can set this meeting in person or virtually. The staff cover career exploration concepts, financial literacy considerations (such as pay checks/direct deposits, spending and saving money) and communication strategies that will be critical between the youth and their parent/guardian as well as their Career Counselor and/or worksite supervisor. Counseling staff may communicate with youth via cell phone texting once the youth sign their ISS giving them permission for electronic communications such as texting and emailing. Many of these communications are performed utilizing Webex for virtual meetings.

Throughout this process, the team is mindful of culturally responsive approaches from engagement, assessment, coordination/communication, and placement. We use this information to secure a worksite/environment that best fits the whole individual. Anoka County, as well as the Job Training Center, continues to offer enhanced training on unintentional bias and micro-inequities and how we can do better at serving a racially diverse community. The JTC has an Equity Asset Committee comprised of staff and management to expand our efforts of identifying barriers and putting in place improvements to address possible inequities within our models.

Once youth are placed at a worksite, counseling staff work together with Economic Assistance to report the income of the youth in a manner that does not affect the family grant.

Throughout their time working with the TANF Innovations program, youth are offered virtual training opportunities on-line. Topics include Financial Literacy & Budgeting, Youth Resume Writing and Keeping a Job. Upon completion, the youth have an opportunity to earn a stipend (Earn while you Learn).

As part of this planning process, the following outreach strategies and established goals will be implemented:

- A. Vocational Counseling staff are assigned the following responsibilities: recruitment and outreach, development of promotional outreach materials, conducting orientations (virtually or in person), assessment, job placement, worksite orientations and monitoring, processing timecards for payroll, job coaching and connecting with MFIP Career Counselors.
- B. Primary target group will be 14-18-year old's in MFIP households followed by 16-24-year-old teen parents on MFIP.
- C. Recruitment efforts will include the following strategies:
 - Informational flyers will be created and distributed, and referrals followed up on immediately.
 - Project staff will attend MFIP unit meetings to inform/remind staff about the program.
 - Targeted mailings will be sent utilizing existing administrative data to capture potential eligible youth.
 - Staff will provide outreach to county and school social workers of teen parents and Secondary Schools' Guidance counselors (in-person, phone or virtually).
 - Individualized outreach will be given to Project Focus families with the assistance of an interpreter.
 - Flyers will be distributed and posted on common websites including the CareerForce platform and County virtual platforms. Flyers and banners will be placed at identified areas: Anoka County Libraries, local food shelves and areas in Economic Assistance as well as the CareerForce Career Lab.
 - Signage will be posted throughout the County on TV/and or kiosks at libraries, DMV's and Government Center lobbies.
 - Outreach will include Twitter and Facebook advertising countywide.
- D. Outreach efforts will be ongoing until the funds are fully obligated.

Percentage of participants expected serve from communities of color

Anoka County is a very diverse community. In reviewing the demographics of TANF youth served during 2022, over 45% served were from communities of color. In 2023 we plan to serve over 50% from communities of color.

Incorporation of Culturally Responsive Programming Approaches

ACJTC has a strong partnership with Urban League Twin Cities and the Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC). Through these partnerships, outreach and services has expanded to under-served and under-represented public assistance recipients. Furthermore, the ACJTC has

a staff person from MUL assisting and advising staff on how to increase outreach and be more inclusive in our service models.

Community based partnerships also expand our outreach and culturally responsive programming opportunities through new networks and resources. The youth team has a close relationship with the YMCA and Hope for Youth which both assist in helping under-served and under-represented youth and youth experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, staff provide outreach to Metro North Adult Basic Education sites in Blaine and Columbia Heights to serve youth as both sites serve a large diverse population.

As stated earlier, the JTC is a recipient of a Project Focus grant which allows us to provide wrap-around services to families that are new to the county (residing in the country for less than 36 months) that are on MFIP. When families are identified from this group, the Career Counselor overseeing Project Focus notifies the youth programs Supervisor and they receive an individualized overview about the TANF Innovations program with the help of an interpreter. ACJTC has access to both phone and in-person interpreters upon request.

3. Describe the youth service provider's plans to introduce career pathways, prepare targeted youth for post-secondary education, provide information on high-growth, in-demand occupations in the region, and deliver financial literacy activities.

Introducing youth to career pathways is pivotal to the TANF Innovation program, from enrollment to evaluation. During enrollment, counseling staff introduce young people to labor market information and occupations in-demand assisting them to make informed decisions regarding their future in the workforce and identifying career pathways. When possible, work experience placements will align with the client's identified and/or expressed career interest areas.

Outreach to potential employers in key sectors is ongoing at CareerForce in Blaine. Our local Workforce Development Board continues to support this project and some of the employers on the board host youth work experiences for our youth programs. Our Business Development Representative works on behalf of the agency as well as the Career Pathway program to promote our programs and form partnerships with new employers. She continues to be instrumental in outreach and engagement with local employers for our job postings and onsite hiring events (2 times a month).

We are also very active in the local chambers. Our area has three active chambers: Metro North Chamber of Commerce, Twin Cities Chamber of Commerce, and the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce.

High Growth, In-demand jobs are a focal point, with expanded outreach to local employers that have entry level jobs that could lead to skill development in a career pathway. Through this grant, we introduce the concepts of work readiness and transferable skill development. Staff utilize many career exploration tools including Occupations in Demand (OID), DEED/CEE

and local STEM career initiatives. The typical wage, long-term employment outlook, training (or degree) required and schools that offer training programs for each occupation is highlighted during career planning with youth and young adults alike. Staff are provided in-service trainings with DEED's Labor Market Analyst to keep current on hiring trends and navigate the ever-changing web of real time data.

Prepare targeted youth for Post-Secondary Education:

Students ages 18 and older and/or recent high graduates that are interested in further occupational skills training are given information on potential schools and training programs. Through one-on-one assessment meetings with their Career Counselor, further educational needs may be identified that could be funded through other grants administered by the ACJTC such as WIOA or Youth at Work funding.

Youth start their career exploration at their initial assessment with their Career Counselor. Educational opportunities will be explored. Youth are encouraged to access tools such as ONetonline.org and tools within the CareerForceMN.com website. Career Exploration workshops are also a great option for youth to attend as well as the online tools on CareerForceMN.com. Once these goals are identified, staff work on a plan to help the youth establish short- and long-term goals to help them succeed.

This year, through this grant, we are looking at the possibility of supporting a couple short-term trainings in career pathways such as a CNA or the construction trades while youth are still in school. The youth team is working with local high schools to provide training opportunities through concurrent enrollment options giving the youth the chance to work on their High School Diploma and a Career Pathway training at the same time. We will look to use minimal TANF Innovations funding to support their training if eligible.

Delivery of Financial Literacy Activities:

Financial literacy or financial well-being goals will be identified at the initial assessment during the establishment of the ISS. An overview of wages, payroll requirements and banking options are covered in the initial orientation with students prior to a work site placement. Their Career Counselor reviews how to budget through an exercise offered in the youth handbook.

An on-line financial literacy library is accessible 24/7 via the Empowers youth page on the County website. This gives quick access to hot topics that are of interest to young people. Counseling staff add to these selections, offering students updated articles, webinars, and examples of how they can better manage their money. Throughout their enrollment, counseling staff send out financial tips to youth via email to help encourage growth in their financial literacy skills.

More substantial assignments are offered through our Learn and Earn project where youth can complete an assignment regarding self-selected topics from our Financial Literacy Library. Stipends are awarded once the youth successfully complete this work. Topics include areas such as budgeting, how to save money, and common overspending habits.

4. Describe how individual youth will be matched with employment opportunities.

Youth are matched with employment opportunities that best align with their interests, opportunities for skill development and/or skill building, and other considerations such as scheduling and transportation needs.

Youth meet one-on-one with their Career Counselor (in-person or virtually). The Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is started at this appointment where the Career Counselor reviews the application with the participant and through conversation, starts to identify skills, interests, barriers, and the individual needs of the client. Counseling staff work with youth to match them with local employers that will best suit their career goals and areas of interest. Staff have access to a large data base of private and public worksites that is utilized by our job placement teams. Individualized outreach and job development will be done as necessary to match youth to occupations in demand.

Career Counselors address barriers during the initial assessment and identify potential support services that may be needed. Transportation assistance is an important part of the support services that are provided to youth. Because the families are struggling financially, providing bus passes or gas cards can be an important part of helping work experiences be successful.

Many of the youth we serve have disabilities. Staff will identify any special concerns that will need to be considered when finding an appropriate worksite and will communicate with worksite supervisors to find a work experience that will focus on the student abilities. The Job Training Center has a Disability Resource Coordinator available to assist staff if special accommodations that may be necessary for a successful work experience placement.

5. Describe any work readiness or occupational training (in person or virtual) that will be part of the project.

Youth are given two handbooks when starting with the TANF Program. One book covers the basics of the program, the other covers the specifics of placement in a work experience. The counseling staff review this information with the youth and make sure they have a full understanding before placement. Topics such as what employers are looking for and safety procedures are included in these handbooks.

The worksite supervisors are also provided a handbook and tasked with on-site training of the youth for their specific work duties. Occasionally a specific training may be identified that the student may benefit from while in the program. If that student is eligible for additional funding streams (such as Youth at Work or WIOA), additional occupational training could be

provided such as forklift certification or paying for a boilers license. TANF Innovations funds could also be used to pay for this training now that this is an allowable expense.

Staff have a COVID 19 Supplemental Handbook to offer to youth and to worksite to ensure special precautions are taken to limit spread of disease. This is covered prior to placement with both the worksites and the youth to review current protocols and requirements. Each site is expected to provide additional on-site training for site specific rules regarding the precautions that site is requiring and/or recommending.

6. If the project design includes payment of stipends to participants, please describe the stipend structure (i.e., for what activities they will be awarded, amount, etc.) and include a copy of the local stipend policy with the plan.

Youth will be able to earn a monetary stipend for completing Learn and Earn coursework.

Youth will have two options:

1. Work Readiness, technology, professional skills development topics or
2. Credential Bearing Training. The training options:
 - Must be tied to ISS and documented
 - Course options include:
 - ✓ Pre-approved vendor of online learning
 - ✓ Webinars/Assignments created by youth counseling staff
 - Documented learning must be documented. Participants can earn up to a \$50 stipend per week. A maximum of \$500 can be earned during a 6-month time frame. Supervisor/Manager approval needed after that threshold has been reached.
 - An additional option exists to earn an incentive of \$50 if they complete a measurable skills gain (bonus paid at end – once measurable skills documentation and evaluations are turned in before signing off on bonus pay).
 - Career Counselors and students need to see if High School elective credit or other credits for work-based learning apply.
 - Career Counselor's monitor/track and mentor and complete and sign voucher requests.
 - If it is credential bearing, it must be pre-approved short-term training– 6 months or less and the school must be a WIOA Approved training provider, and they must have the ability to earn a WIOA Approved Credential.

The full policy is attached.

7. If the project design includes payment of incentives to participants, please describe the incentive structure (i.e. for what achievements they will be awarded, amount, etc.) and include a copy of the local incentive policy with the plan.

Funds can be used to provide incentives for recognition and achievement to eligible youth seeking assistance with academic and employment success. Funds can be used in the form of

“incentives” to be used to encourage and motivate youth to reach specific goals and obtain positive outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Incentives are awarded upon the completion of activities that are tied to goals in each participant’s Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The Empowers Career Counselor will have the ability to make the decision about when and if the participants receive the incentives.
- The incentive payments below shall be awarded equitably to eligible participants.
- The incentive awards are part of the overall Supportive Services expenditures and tracked in WF1. A case note will be made for each incentive awarded and listed on the participant’s ISS.
- Incentives are not to exceed \$200 in a 12-month calendar year for an individual youth.
- All incentives may be limited by program funding availability.
- Typical incentives may include but are not limited to retail gift cards and gas cards. Incentives may never be issued or used for entertainment establishments.
- The incentive policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

GED Students:

- \$25 Completing and passing the battery of GED Ready tests (all four sections)
- \$25 Attaining GED – must provide copy of GED

Diploma Students:

- \$25 Submitting a copy of high school grades/college grades at the end of a school term showing a GPA of 2.0 or higher or average grade of C or higher
- \$50 Receiving diploma – must provide copy of diploma or transcript

Out of School Youth (With Educational and/or Employment Goals):

- \$25 Submitting documentation during enrollment needed for measurable skills gained related to their ISS
- \$50 Securing permanent employment at 30 hours a week and providing employment information and/or a copy of a pay stub to their Empowers Career Counselor
- \$50 Submitting a copy of a credential while enrolled or within one year after exit (i.e. AA degree, CNA). For 1st credential only. Youth must turn in copy of certificate/degree to receive incentive
- \$50 Submitting a pay stub showing employment during the 4th quarter after exit quarter

INDIVIDUALIZED INCENTIVES:

Career Counselors will award an incentive that is tied to an educational or work experience goal that is outlined in the ISS that is tailored to the individual needs of the youth and approved by the Empowers Program Manager.

The full policy is the second attachment.

8. Describe the youth service provider's plans to measure Work Readiness Indicators for targeted youth. Also identify any other LOCAL benchmarks/performance indicators for youth served under the 2023 TANF Innovation Project.

The Job Training Center utilizes the Youth Performance Evaluation form that was developed in partnership with DEED. This document allows for each youth to be rated by their worksite supervisor on key work skills such as attendance, punctuality, initiative, ability to follow instructions, communication, teamwork, appropriate work conduct, etc. There is also an opportunity for site supervisors to highlight what work areas the youth are doing well along with areas for improvement. The evaluation uses a rating measurement scale and are reviewed with the youth by the supervisor and then submitted to the staff. Copies will be provided to each participant for their personal records/portfolio.

Our findings show that when a youth experiences a mini performance review during the early stages on the job, they are more engaged and likely to talk through situations because they feel site supervisors are open to that after experiencing the opportunity in this manner. This review will also help the youth earn a raise of \$.50 per hour upon a successful first two weeks of work and an intentional follow up with their onsite supervisor.

9. Describe any plans to co-enroll TANF Youth participants in other DEED-funded youth programs. Include the programs in which participants are likely to be co-enrolled and the services to be provided through this co-enrollment.

The JTC staff assess for co-enrollment opportunities at the time of application and typically will only co-enroll with MYP and YAW as our focus has been on younger participants that are still in school. We monitor the case and timeline of services and will often seek other eligible programs if applicable. Some TANF youth will work with our agency each summer until graduation, if eligible. Serving families with multiple children is a benefit this program offers, as we serve more than one youth from the same family and/or household making the connection to work and access to our services more impactful for the family.

10. Describe the planned wage structure for work experience. If a wage higher than the minimum wage will be offered, explain how the wage rate will be determined.

First Work Experience:

The wage can never be less than minimum wage – which is set at \$10.33/hr. or defaults to the current minimum wage at the time. Typically changes around the first of the calendar year. New rate as of April 1, 2022, are \$ 14/hr.

* Special Note for TANF Youth - the wages earned by a youth in a TANF household are excluded per guidance from DHS.

Pay for Performance option:

Allows for a .50/hour increase based on a satisfactory or better review after the first 40 hours of work. One time increase allowed per client.

Special circumstances outside of the framework should be consulted with either the youth program Supervisor and/or Manager.

ATTACHMENT 1: WORK PLAN 2023 TANF INNOVATION PROJECT

Provide a brief summary of planned services/activities provided in the project. Make additional copies of this form as needed.

Agency: Anoka County Job Training Center		Contact: Darcy Hokkanen		
Project Goal: To provide a meaningful career pathway exposure, work experience opportunities and related support services to youth ages 14-18, who are on the cash grant in MFIP households, followed by teen/young parents aged 16-24 who are receiving cash benefits.				
Strategies (activities, steps, and tasks to achieve the goal):	Expected Outcomes	Number Served	Start Date	End Date
Outreach, data collection and onboarding procedures set up across the agency to meet with youth and families through direct mailings and information sessions.	Youth referrals generated from across Anoka County MFIP, Youth Program, and Social Services serving minor parents.	20	01/01/2023	12/31/2023
Targeted mailing lists requested.	Periodic mailings sent to potentially eligible participants.	Estimate 400	01/01/2023	12/31/2023
Finalize enrollment procedures, payroll process and WF1 codes.	Inform staff of procedures, project goals, and communication expectations for case management.		Ongoing	
Project staff builds case load, talks with potential youth/families, and secure placements/work sites.	Project staff schedule individual orientations (virtual or in-person) and begins the assessment process to develop employment plans and paid work experience activities.	20	Ongoing	12/31/2023
Placed in paid work experiences	Participants will be placed in paid work experiences and worksite monitoring will be conducted by staff.	15	Ongoing	12/31/2022
Counseling staff will offer Learn and Earn activities throughout the year providing safe opportunities for youth to building upon their skills.	Participants will learn valuable work skills in a safe setting. This provides youth an opportunity who are affected by the global health pandemic, a safe alternative to learn similar things to what may have been learned during a regular work experience. They will also earn a paid stipend for completing assigned activities.	3-5	01/01/2023	12/31/2023
Project staff will introduce youth to career pathway concepts and career exploration tools.	Participants will receive career pathway information and opportunities to use tools in one-to-one or small group sessions. Topics will include Labor Market Info, Careers in demand and How to build your skills and credentials for the future.	20	01/01/2023	12/31/2023

Agency: Anoka County Job Training Center	Contact: Darcy Hokkanen
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Project Goal: To provide a meaningful career pathway exposure, work experience opportunities and related support services to youth ages 14-18, who are on the cash grant in MFIP households, followed by teen/young parents aged 16-24 who are receiving cash benefits.

Strategies (activities, steps, and tasks to achieve the goal):	Expected Outcomes	Number Served	Start Date	End Date
Introduction to Financial Literacy or Financial Well Being Concepts.	Participants will be informed about choices and responsibilities of money making and money management. Sample topics: payroll, timesheets, opening a bank account, budgeting, saving models, common credit questions and incentive opportunities.	20	01/01/2023	12/31/2023
Implement Work Readiness measurement of key work skills.	Each participant will be evaluated by their worksite supervisor on the key indicators of work performance. These evaluations will be reviewed by the participant with their supervisor and then again with the Career Counselor to reflect on the areas of strengths and possible areas of improvement.	15	01/01/2023	12/31/2023
Complete Certificate of Training	Older students will be offered the opportunity to gain training in specific career. Upon completed of a short-term training request, based on budget availability, funding will be provided to complete training. Examples of this are CNA and construction trades utilizing the possibility of concurrent enrollment completing certification in a career field while also completing their High School Diploma.	1-2	01/01/2023	12/31/2023

**ATTACHMENT 2: BUDGET
2023 TANF INNOVATION PROJECT**

BUDGET PERIOD: January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023

Agency	Contact Person Phone/ E-mail
Anoka County Job Training Center Nicole Swanson, Director 1201 89 th Ave NE, Suite 235 Blaine, MN 55434	Becky White 763-324-2303 Becky.White@co.anoka.mn.us

Budget Category	TANF Innovation Funds
833 - Administration (5% maximum)	\$2,125.00
881 - Youth Wages and Fringe Benefits	\$32,000.00
885 - Direct Services to Youth	\$8,125.00
891 - Support Services	\$250.00
TOTAL	\$42,500.00

Budget Category	Provide a detailed breakdown of the items and amounts budgeted:
833 – Administration (5% maximum)	Admin wages \$1,525.00
	Admin fringe benefits \$ 170.00
	Associated/other Admin costs \$ 430.00
881 – Youth Wages and Fringe Benefits	(Please provide details on how funds will be allocated i.e. stipends, wages, etc.)
	Wages & fringe paid directly to participants in work experience \$32,000.00
885 – Direct Services to Youth	(Please provide details on how funds will be allocated i.e. direct staffing costs, training funds, tuition, etc.)
	Costs associated with staff working directly with the TANF Innovation program.
	Staff wages \$4,980.00
	Staff fringe benefits \$ 554.00
	Associated/other Staff costs \$1,091.00
891 – Support Services	Participant training costs \$1,500.00
	(Please provide details on how you anticipate funds will be allocated i.e. transportation, clothing, tools, etc.)
	Support service funds will be used to help participants with transportation needs, work clothing and work tools. Support service funds will also be used towards participant training and work incentives.
	\$250.00

BUDGET CATEGORIES

Administration: Costs are defined by Federal Rules at 2 CFR 200 and are generally associated with the expenditures related to the overall operation of the employment and training system. Administrative costs are associated with functions not related to the direct provision of services to program participants. These costs can be both personnel and non-personnel and both direct and indirect. Specifically, the project defines the following costs as administration:

- Accounting, budgeting, financial and cash management functions;
- Procurement and purchasing functions;
- Property management functions;
- Personnel management functions;
- Payroll functions;
- Audit functions;
- Incident reports response functions;
- General legal service functions;
- Costs of goods and services required for the administrative functions of the program including such items as rental/purchase of equipment, utilities, office supplies, postage, and rental and maintenance of office space;
- Systems and procedures required to carry out the above administrative functions including necessary monitoring and oversight; and,
- Travel costs incurred for official business related to the above administrative functions.

Youth Wages and Fringe Benefits – Wages and benefits paid directly to youth participants while engaged in program activities. Stipends provided for educational activities should be included in this cost category.

Direct Services to Youth – Costs associated with providing direct service to youth, **EXCLUDING** costs of youth participant wages and fringe benefits and support services. Wages and fringe benefits for staff providing direct services to youth participants should be included in this cost category. Tuition payments for training programs should also be included in this category.

Support Services – Items that are necessary for a youth to participate in the project, such as transportation, clothing, tools, childcare, housing/rental assistance, school-related expenses (other than tuition), etc. These expenses may be paid directly to the youth or to a third-party vendor.

Empowers • Earn while you Learn Stipend Policy

Anoka County Job Training Center
Local Program Policy and Procedures

Last updated 03/29/2022

Background:

Given the global pandemic and the changing sphere of available work experience opportunities, the Empowers youth team has added the opportunity for youth to “Earn While they Learn”. This model is designed to provide a safe and aligned youth skill building activity, accessible by most eligibility-based programs, that includes a stipend for learning new skills-similar to what may have been learned during a regular work experience.

Eligible programs:

MYP, TANF Youth, WIOA ISY and OSY, and YAW.

Earn and Learn Options:

Option One: Work Readiness, technology, professional skills development topics:

- Must be tied to ISS and documented
- Course options include:
 - ✓ Coursera or other pre-approved vendor of online learning
 - ✓ Webinars/Assignments created by youth counseling staff
- Documented learning must be active and documented, participants can earn up to a \$50 stipend per week. A maximum of \$500 can be earned during a 6-month time frame. Supervisor/Manager approval needed after that threshold has been reached.
- Plus, an additional option exists to earn an incentive of \$50 if they complete a measurable skills gain (bonus paid at end – once measurable skills docs and evaluations are turned in before signing off on bonus pay).
- Career Counselors and students need to see if HS elective credit or other credits for work-based learning apply.
- Career Counselors monitor/track and mentor and complete and sign voucher requests.

Possible topics include:

- Improving communication skills, Time management, Teamwork
- Financial literacy
- Exploring career interests
- Virtual networking, e-mentoring and opportunity to earn certificates to add to their portfolio
- Microsoft Office (WORD, PPT, Excel, and Access).

Option Two: Credential Bearing

- Must tie to ISS, assessments completed and documented
- Pre-approved short-term training– 6 months or less
- The school must be a WIOA Approved training provider
- Ability to earn a WIOA Approved Credential

Procedural Information:

Requirements to prior to approval:

- Complete Short-Term Training Packet which includes current LMI justification
- Document in case notes outlining the role of the youth and the Career Counselor during participation in the program.
- Enter case note verifying current address and social security number.
- Update ISS
- Complete IRS paperwork

Requirements to remain in the program:

- Make adequate progress towards the academic requirement of your credential training
- Meet attendance requirements for the class you are enrolled in
- Report weekly to your Career Counselor by phone or by email giving an update on progress
- Meet with your Career Counselor to work on an updated resume

Requirements at the end of the program:

- You must turn in a copy of your credential prior to receiving your final stipend
- You must meet with your Career Counselor within 10 days of completing your training to update your Individual Plan and develop your job search plan.

Tracking & Evaluation

- Tracking will occur from the program side in WF1 and through the fiscal department through accounts payable and each individual youth program grant budget.
- Monitoring and evaluation will occur throughout the pilot period as well through regular internal monitoring.

Incentive Policy for *Empowers* Youth Programs

Anoka County Job Training Center

Updated October 2022

For youth participants enrolled in the WIOA Youth, MYP, TANF and Youth at Work programs

WIOA Youth funds can be used to provide incentives for recognition and achievement to eligible youth seeking assistance with academic and employment success. Funds can be used in the form of “incentives” to be used to encourage and motivate WIOA youth to reach specific goals and obtain positive outcomes. The MYP Program, TANF Program and the Youth at Work Program does not have any policy prohibiting or limiting the use of support services funds for incentives.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Incentives are awarded upon the completion of activities that are tied to goals in each participant’s Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The Empowers Career Counselor will have the ability to make the decision about when and if the participants receive the incentives.
- The incentive payments below shall be awarded equitably to eligible participants.
- The incentive awards will be part of the overall Supportive Services expenditures and tracked in WF1. A case note will be made for each incentive awarded and listed on the participant’s ISS.
- Incentives are not to exceed \$200 in a 12-month calendar year for an individual youth.
- All incentives may be limited by program funding availability.
- Typical incentives may include but are not limited to retail gift cards and gas cards. Incentives may never be issued or used for entertainment establishments.
- The incentive policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

GED Students:

- \$25 Completing and passing the battery of GED Ready tests (all four sections)
- \$25 Attaining GED – must provide copy of GED

Diploma Students:

- \$25 Submitting a copy of high school grades/college grades at the end of a school term showing a GPA of 2.0 or higher or average grade of C or higher
- \$50 Receiving diploma – must provide copy of diploma or transcript

Out of School Youth (With Educational and/or Employment Goals):

- \$25 Submitting documentation during enrollment needed for measurable skills gained related to their ISS
- \$50 Securing permanent employment at 30 hours a week and providing employment information and/or a copy of a pay stub to their Empowers Career Counselor
- \$50 Submitting a copy of a credential while enrolled or within one year after exit (i.e. AA degree, CNA). For 1st credential only. Youth must turn in copy of certificate/degree to receive incentive
- \$50 Submitting a pay stub showing employment during the 4th quarter after exit quarter

INDIVIDUALIZED INCENTIVES:

Career Counselors will award an incentive that is tied to an educational or work experience goal that is outlined in the ISS that is tailored to the individual needs of the youth and approved by the Empowers Program Manager.