

YOUTH COMMITTEE RESOURCE GUIDE



**Cooperative
Youth Services
and Best
Practices**

June 2023

This is a compilation of best practices providing a snapshot of cooperative youth service strategies underway in Minnesota's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs).

Youth Committees are multi-sector local partnerships involved in shared decision-making, community education and awareness, resource mapping, youth-centered planning, program development and capacity building.

Youth Committees (per Sec. 681.120 in WIOA Final Rules found in <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15975.pdf>):

- Recommend policy direction to the LWDB for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth;
- Recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system to ensure a full range of services and opportunities for all youth, including disconnected youth;
- Recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth;
- Recommend ways to coordinate youth services and recommend eligible youth service providers;
- Provide on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs;
- Assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth; and
- If so delegated by the LWDB after consultation with the chief elected official (CEO), oversee eligible youth providers, as well as other youth program oversight responsibilities.

The **Youth Committee Membership (per Sec. 681.110 in WIOA Final Rules found in <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15975.pdf>)** shall include the following as described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):

- Chaired by a member of the LWDB and including members with special interest or expertise in youth policy;
- Members of community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth and other individuals with appropriate expertise and experience who are not members of the Local Board;
- The Committee must reflect the needs of the local area. Members may represent agencies such as secondary and postsecondary education, training, health, disability, mental health, housing, public assistance, and justice, or be representatives of philanthropic or economic and community development organizations, and employers. The committee may also include parents, participants, and youth.

A LWDB may designate an existing entity such as an effective youth council as the standing youth committee if it fulfills the requirements above in the first two bullets. The Youth Committee may also include other individuals as determined to be appropriate by the Chair of the LWDB in consultation with the Chief Elected Official.

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Young Adult Program Web Page:

<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp>

Resources to Support Workforce Development Boards and Youth Employment Web Page:

<https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/02/26/14/40/Resources-to-Support-Workforce-Development-Boards>

<https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/03/29/20/42/Resources-to-Support-Youth-Employment>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- WDA 1 – NORTHWEST PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL 4
- WDA 2 – RURAL MINNESOTA CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS, INC. 6
- WDA 3 – JET - NORTHEAST MINNESOTA OFFICE OF JOB TRAINING 8
- WDA 4 – DULUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT 9
- WDA 5 – CENTRAL MINNESOTA JOBS AND TRAINING SERVICES 11
- WDA 6 – SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL 14
- WDA 7 – SOUTH CENTRAL WORKFORCE COUNCIL 16
- WDA 8 – SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, INC. 18
- WDA 9 – HENNEPIN/CARVER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 20
- WDA 10 – MINNEAPOLIS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING 22
- WDA 12 – ANOKA COUNTY JOB TRAINING CENTER 24
- WDA 14 – DAKOTA-SCOTT WORKFORCE SERVICES 26
- WDA 15 – RAMSEY COUNTY WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS 29
- WDA 16 – WASHINGTON COUNTY WORKFORCE CENTER 31
- WDA 17 – CAREER SOLUTIONS 33

WDA 1 – NORTHWEST PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

SERVICE AREA: Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau counties.

MISSION: *“Investing Today’s Resources in Tomorrow’s Workers”*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Partnership:

The Northwest Private Industry Council contracts with MYP grantee and local community action agency Inter-County Community Council (ICCC) to provide WIOA youth services. By contracting with a community action agency all of our participants are connected to other resources in the region to help overcome barriers.

Work Experience:

ICCC works closely with local businesses, schools and government entities to provide work experience opportunities to youth ages 14-24 to help gain skills and experiences that are necessary to be successful in the workplace.

Some of the skills learned include:

- Punctuality
- Personal Hygiene
- Taking Constructive criticism
- Reliability
- Safety
- Interpersonal Skills

The Northern Valley Career Expo:

An interactive career exploration event that was developed through a collaboration of workforce, education and economic development agencies in Northwest Minnesota and Northeast North Dakota. The purpose of the Expo is to expose high school students to high-wage, in-demand occupations within the region. The Expo offers 20 different breakout sessions focused on careers that are most in demand in the region. These sessions are facilitated by local industry leaders. In the sessions, youth learn about work place expectations, values, job duties, and educational requirements for different types of careers. In addition to the breakout sessions, youth also have the opportunity to explore the exhibit hall where they are able to interact with representatives from local businesses. The business exhibitors are asked to highlight their local in-demand occupations and also provide an interactive exhibit that would allow students to experience things that they might encounter on-the-job.

HUD Youth Demonstration Grant:

ICCC provides assistance to homeless youth. Currently ICCC is partnering on a project to create a comprehensive homeless response system in the Northwest Minnesota Region for unaccompanied youth, ages 16-24 years, making youth homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. The project serves the Northwest Minnesota Continuum of Care (CoC) 12-county geographic area including: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Roseau, and Red Lake. ICCC’s specific project works with neighboring Community Action Agencies and provides resources in all counties except Beltrami. A specific component of this comprehensive response system is working on employment with homeless youth. This project will coordinate, build on and expand the existing collaboration with the employment and training services dedicated to serving the youth in the region. These would include working with WIOA in school and out of school partners as well as the Minnesota Youth Program. They will also work with other mainstream and private market employers and training programs to develop on-the job training and foster new relationships and programs. Job Training Specialists and homeless case managers currently meet with participants simultaneously to reduce the amount of times the participant needs to come to a local office and approach case management as a team approach. ICCC, as a member of CoC, was awarded the Homeless Youth Demonstration Grant from HUD and will work to provide wrap around services, not just employment and training, to homeless youth. In light of this work with homeless youth WDA 1 has obtained

a waiver to use 40% of its WIOA youth funds to work with in-school youth to combat homelessness.

Pre-ETS partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

ICCC has contracted with VRS to provide Pre-Employment Transitional Services (Pre-ETS) to youth that are potentially eligible for VRS Services. ICCC staff receive referrals from VRS to provide one or multiple of the Pre-ETS. These services include:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

WDA 2 – RURAL MINNESOTA CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS, INC.

SERVICE AREA: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomon, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin counties.

MISSION: *“To establish a comprehensive youth development system that will assist youth to achieve economic self-sufficiency and empower them to act as solid contributors to community growth. The system will provide effective learning environments linking education and employment; leadership development; nurturing mentors; and sustained support while committed to Racial Equity in its practice, policies, and procedures.”*

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Career Advisor/Outreach Program:

Rural Minnesota CEP (RMCEP)’s Career Advising in the high school is an innovative Best Practice that has gained statewide attention. Understanding that career preparation and work-based learning experiences are essential for youth to make informed decisions about careers and that the ratio of counselors to students in Minnesota’s secondary schools is challenging, RMCEP developed and delivers career advising to Minnesota school districts and the West Central Juvenile Center as requested.

RMCEP also takes advantage of the MYP Outreach to Schools funding to plan specific youth related hands on or career pathway activities for youth in our service area. Some examples of this are the use

of the Big Ideas trailer which gives young people a simulated and augmented experience in CAT excavating, welding, painting and through the use of Oculus headsets allows them to explore 23 different trades of interest. It offers basic introductions from auto maintenance to warehouse crane operations to fire suppression. We recently obtained CareerView XR to increase community engagement and interest in high-demand trade careers through immersive digital experiences that allow people to explore careers and communities virtually using 360-degree and virtual reality imagery. Other examples are coordinating tours during the manufacturing month as well as specific youth related areas as part of the Job Fairs that our teams hold.

Financial Literacy:

In 2021 all RMCEP staff completed intensive Financial Literacy training provided by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Topics such as: Paying Bills, Student loan repayment, Understanding credit, and Saving practices were covered and are now incorporated into our work with youth. Through using these tools, youth participants are broadening their knowledge of important life-long money concepts and the importance of planning.

Work Experience:

We incorporate program activities to instill work ethic, work maturity, employability skills employers desire and along with equity and inclusion awareness to prepare youth for apprenticeships, employment, and/or post-secondary success. Our staff have also completed diversity, equity and inclusion training to ensure that we are carrying this message and information to all our participants. One of the most valuable activities we employ is Work Experience, where youth can “learn and do” in an environment that closely matches their career interest. This is a planned, structured learning experience that provides an opportunity for assessment, intervention strategies, and demonstration of job retention skills. These are measured using an Evaluation of Trainee Performance and Behaviors tool which is tied to the participant’s Work Readiness goal in their ISS/ Employment Plan. These skill areas are reviewed:

1. Reliability
2. Interpersonal Relationships
3. Work Site Appropriateness
4. Problem Solving
5. Communication Skills
6. Productivity
7. Accuracy
8. Safety

From the time the participants complete the World of Work orientation, most participants show progress through the end of the work experience activity. Orientation to Work Skills increases success in areas needed for lifelong employment.

Youth at Work

RMCEP seeks to improve its ability to help youth learn these skills by focusing on Career Pathways in Occupations in Demand and coupling this training with a work-based learning program in an entry-level position within their chosen career pathway. The primary goal in this initiative will be to provide a recognized credential or certificate in one of the identified career pathways and pair the training with a related work-based learning experience. Each youth participant who is placed in work-based learning will be mentored for the development of employability skills.

To support completion of educational programs and the credentials and certificates, incentives are available for those participants that complete planned training and/or earn an industry recognized credentials. Work-based learning will be provided to further develop employability skills and build work history in high demand occupations.

Youth Focus Groups:

Each summer, the youth coordinators in each CareerForce location in our service area conduct a focus group question and discussion session with eight to twelve participants involved in each group. These focus groups are designed to bring direct participant feedback on a variety of program process, knowledge, and needed supports to the Youth Council. This information is used when the Youth Council develops the key priorities for focus during the next year's youth program plan.

Youth Council:

The RMCEP Youth Council has identified the following strategies as key priorities for 2023:

Youth key priorities for 2023

1. Resiliency: Staff will understand the causes of trauma producing events and its long-term effects on employability. Staff will have the knowledge to respond appropriately.
2. Staff will discuss, promote and work with the youth to identify one caring adult relationship that models responsibility and success in meaningful and relevant activities and roles.
3. Financial Literacy practices will be embedded within Individual Employment Plans.

4. Expand Leadership and Community Involvement Opportunities in Individual Employment Plans. Participants will engage in Career Planning Activities to include conversations on Local Job Market Information (LMI) and post-secondary employment and training options.
5. Prioritize training for Youth Counselors in Equity, Access, and Inclusion outreach and guidance

RMCEP Provider Affiliate of American Dream Employment Network (ADEN):

RMCEP provides the Ticket to Work Program to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries to reconnect them to their career pathway. This is especially important for youth who turn 18 and become SSA beneficiaries under the adult status. We can build on the success they have had in youth programs and provide up to 78 months of benefit and work incentive advisement through the Ticket to Work program.

Social Security Advocacy Services.

Applying for federal Social Security disability benefits can be a challenge. Minnesota Department of Human Services Social Security advocates are available to help persons file an application, appeal a denied application, and make sure that you are applying for all benefits for which they are eligible.

Eligible persons are those who have a disability which has lasted or will last for 12 months or longer; and live in the state of Minnesota; and are currently homeless OR at risk for homelessness.

RMCEP's DHS Social Security trained advocate will:

- Provide services free of charge
- Answer your questions
- Conduct an initial screening and intake assessment
- Act as your Authorized Representative with the Social Security Administration
- Help you fill out forms and talk with Social Security representatives
- File an appeal if your application is denied
- Represent you at hearings
- Represent you in a continuing disability review
- Represent you at the appeals council.

WDA 3 – JET - NORTHEAST MINNESOTA OFFICE OF JOB TRAINING

SERVICE AREA: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and Saint Louis counties, excluding City of Duluth.

MISSION: *Build thriving communities by guiding and empowering individuals*

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Career EdVenture:

Career EdVenture is a strong partnership between the K12 system, the public workforce development system, and the business community. We are here to share the expertise of our established workforce development system with students across the region to ensure they make an informed decision for themselves, and their future along with graduating with an understanding of what employers expect of them as they enter the labor force. Career EdVenture is in no way meant to displace school guidance counselors, but rather to assist with providing career planning services, a critical piece for an informed and prepared workforce. Services are provided through individual counseling or via classroom workshops (both either in person or virtually). Career topics may include: career exploration and assessment, labor market data, job searching (resume, interviewing, applications), post-secondary training options, workplace culture, etc.

Career EdVenture also provides JET career counseling staff with opportunities to meet and screen potentially eligible students for more intensive programming and services such as In-School and Out-of School youth (WIOA), Minnesota Youth Program or Youth at Work.

218Trades:

218Trades provides access to comprehensive services geared to connect high school youth and young adults to career opportunities in the construction and building trades. Over the next 15 years, high wage and high demand careers will be available within the 218 area code region as more than \$2 billion dollars will be invested in construction projects creating large numbers of career opportunities. JET provides youth and their parents with information to seek viable careers through an alignment with employers, trade unions and educational institutions. 218Trades convenes school information sessions and community hands-on trade events such as our 218Trades Event or Construct Tomorrow where hands on demonstrations and work simulations are available for attendees to experience. JET Career Counselors utilize the website www.218trades.com to provide individualized services as they assist individuals applying for trade apprenticeships and with services to attend post-secondary training at local community and technical colleges for trades programming. Information can be accessed through www.218trades.com

Across the region:

Across the region, JET Career Counselors partner with diverse community organizations to collaboratively serve our area youth and young adults. Some examples of our cross-collaboration include: treatment courts and probation, WIC offices, Adult Basic Education, Youth Build, North Homes Inc., and a variety of local nonprofits and youth-serving agencies.

JET is actively involved in facilitating and/or co-hosting local and regional career fairs. We spearheaded the region's first virtual job fair during the pandemic. Other career fair events include the annual Iron Range Job Fair and the biennial career fair in Aitkin County. These events provide opportunities for students to learn about careers in industry sectors, network with perspective employers, apply for jobs, and have their resumes reviewed by prospective employers. Our in-person events incorporate hands-on activities so students can learn the types of job skills needed for specific careers. The virtual career fair is open to students, businesses and training institutions across the northeast region. Virtually, students learn from live employer chats and through videos highlighting careers. Our career fairs provide an opportunity for colleges, military, private and non-profit organizations to collaborate and develop relationships with our future workforce. JET Career Counselors collaborate with schools to prepare students to be successful at these events whether in person or virtual. This preparation includes resume writing, interview prep, and overall introduction to career fair format and strategies.

WDA 4 – DULUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SERVICE AREA: City of Duluth

MISSION: *“To guide and coordinate partnerships with local organizations that foster the full employment potential of youth and young adults in the Duluth area.”*

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Interagency Referrals:

Duluth Workforce Development’s YES Duluth program maintains a strong referral network that effectively connects youth with the program. This core network includes ISD 709 Counselors, Life House, Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, SOAR Career Services, Valley Youth Center, Family Freedom Center, Denfeld Community School Collaborative, and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) counselors. YES Duluth staff meet regularly with area partners to effectively refer youth to appropriate services, community violence prevention efforts, and to communicate regarding eligibility, program elements, support services and incentives.

Outreach Strategies:

YES Duluth staff are continually building relationships and extending into the community to connect with youth in greatest need of support. Connections most recently formed are with Men as Peacemakers, Family Freedom Center, Community Action Duluth (CAD), Lutheran Social Services, Duluth Adult Education (DAE), Lake Superior College, ISD 709 staff, Harbor City International Charter School, and Arrowhead Juvenile Corrections center (AJC). Additionally, YES

Duluth participates in multiple events throughout the year including Construct Tomorrow, Northland Career Fair, Pathways to Careers, Duluth Back to School events, community resource fairs, and job fairs and mock interview events at area high schools, all of which focus on leading individuals to success in employment and furthering training.

Opportunity Youth of Duluth (OYOD) Initiative:

OYOD is a collaborative effort involving SOAR Career Solutions, NYS, Life House, Duluth Adult Education and YES Duluth as an effort to provide a comprehensive support system to help our community’s hardest to serve youth. OYOD gives under-served and under-represented youth an opportunity to fulfill areas of need including housing, employment and education, mental health services, chemical dependency treatment, and more.

Work Readiness Training:

YES Duluth incorporates a program structure during the early stages of a youth’s enrollment that covers one-on-one job preparation, career planning, and Labor Market Information. To keep current Labor Market Information (LMI) accessible, an LMI Snapshot directed toward youth is updated bi-annually and shared with participants. As a best practice, job counselors utilize tools and assessments from Career EdVentures, the Holland Code, and Careerwise Education to support individuals in developing their own career pathways and plan for obtaining stackable credentials in post-secondary education. We are incorporating virtual work readiness training and career exploration, utilizing Conover Company and Virtual Job Shadow.

Business Partnerships:

YES Duluth continually works to diversify its pool of employers that provide Work Experience to our youth participants. When establishing relationships with local businesses, we strive for a balance of LMI-based employer connections and person-centered employment options. While developing new worksites, the employers are provided information and tools from the Diversity and Inclusion Employer Action Guide, <https://duluthmn.gov/media/12991/di-employer-action-guide-final.pdf>. Beyond Work Experience, job counselors are making connections with local businesses for the purpose of informational interviewing and job shadows as we discover youth’s goals and interests in career pathways.

Financial Literacy:

YES Duluth utilizes a variety of financial literacy curriculum and financial capability materials including Your Money, Your Goals from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. YES Duluth has incorporated

financial literacy into one-on-one sessions to provide relevant information based on the age, experience, and needs of the individual. Referrals to partner agencies with financial coaches and financial empowerment programs including Community Action Duluth, Duluth Adult Education, and Lutheran Social Services are also made as appropriate for the individual.

Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) Outreach to Schools:

YES Duluth has one youth employment specialist dedicated to working in the Career Centers at East and Denfeld High Schools and, as part of MYP OTS, there is a concerted effort to engage with and serve under-represented populations. To reach more students of color and augment the partnership with the Career Centers, YES Duluth is strengthening relationships with school integration specialists and the American Indian Home based student liaison. Activities will complement the work of school guidance counselors and part-time career center staff and provide greater opportunities for students to:

1. Identify and explore areas of career interest;
2. Gain exposure to different occupations through tours and other opportunities;
3. Gain work readiness and work experience that help prepare students for future work;
4. Receive individualized assistance with development of a plan that puts them on track for success in work and life.

Denfeld Community School Collaboration:

A collaboration with DCSC staff provides YES Duluth with an opportunity to serve more students and families at a deeper level. Through the collaboration, YES Duluth is able to engage families in conversations about scholarships, financial aid, post-secondary training, and overall services offered through CareerForce and the community at large.

Construct Tomorrow:

A two-day event for high school students to raise awareness about career opportunities in the construction and building trades. Hands-on demonstrations and work simulations are available for students from school districts in the region. A partnership with Construct Tomorrow, 218 Trades, DEED, and the Perkins Consortium has made it a successful event each year. This year, 835 students from 25 schools attended and engaged with the trades representatives. An evening event open to the public has also proved to be successful in building interest in the trades.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS):

The intention of Pre-ETS is to introduce career pathways to VRS-eligible youth and to provide opportunities related to job exploration, work-based learning, post-secondary education planning, work readiness training, and self-advocacy skill development. Youth participating in Pre-ETS must be referred, enrolled, and authorized by VRS prior to receiving the authorized services.

WDA 5 – CENTRAL MINNESOTA JOBS AND TRAINING SERVICES

SERVICE AREA: Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, and Wright Counties.

MISSION: “To help youth make a connection between learning and earning.”

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Youth with Disabilities

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Career You)

In partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), CMJTS has become a limited use vendor (LUV) to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to youth with disabilities, ages 14-21, who are potentially eligible for VRS services. Career You provides an opportunity for these youth to explore career and training options, gain work skills, and learn how to be successful after high school, including post-secondary education and/or competitive employment.

Services provided are one-on-one or through large group activities, centered on job search/exploration, post-secondary education counseling, work-based learning, budgeting, work-readiness training, self-advocacy instruction, and community learning projects.

Integrated Service Delivery

Through the participation of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), CMJTS continues to provide services to youth with disabilities. These services focus on the following key approaches: implementing the Guidepost to Success, incorporating Integrated

Resource Teams, and increasing services to Ticket to Work beneficiaries. In addition, CMJTS recognizes the challenge youth face when understanding their social security disability benefits, therefore, CMJTS has three certified work incentive counselors to assist youth in transition in navigating the impact employment will have on their social security benefits.

Direct Care Career Exploration Roadshow

CMJTS received a disability innovation grant through DHS that will help expand our career pathway efforts. Through this initiative, staff developed a roadshow that will include presentations and videos of direct care positions, e.g., PCA, CNA, direct support professional, hands-on exploration activities, such as an escape room experience or helping others with life skills (when remotely, instructions will be provided on how to do the activity at home with items typically found at home), career pathway information, and understanding if “you” are a good fit for that career. Our hopes are this initiative will inspire youth to want to do a work experience in one of those fields in direct care. Youth and jobseekers also have the opportunity to access free training through DirectCourse MN, a curriculum provided through the University of Minnesota of Human Services and DirectCourse staff. This curriculum allows youth access to customize learning modules prior to being in the position based on individual learning needs.

TANF Youth Innovation Project

The TANF Youth Innovation Project is an exclusive collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), serving young parents, up to age 24, who are receiving cash assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). It also serves youth, ages 14-18, from families receiving this assistance. This program focuses on career pathways and paid work experiences, as well as short-term training opportunities (e.g., nursing assistant certification training, forklift training) that will lead to self-sufficiency.

Youth At Work-Operation Exploration

With funding provided through DEED, this program focuses on improving work-readiness and career pathway awareness through Operation Exploration (OE), an innovative hands-on career exploration camp focusing on in-demand career pathways-healthcare, the trades, manufacturing, and/or information technology. After Operation Exploration, based on individual needs, youth will participate in a work-based learning experience, service-learning project, and/or credentialed training. This initiative will target youth with disabilities, youth of color, and/or homeless youth that are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk youth.

Youthbuild

A partnership with Empower Learning Center provides school dropouts and/or potential dropouts the support needed to finish their diploma by providing specialized hands-on learning opportunities in the trades. Youth get the opportunity to give back by completing projects for low-income communities while developing their work-readiness, basic construction, and leadership skills.

Youth Support Services

PathFinders (Finding Your Right Path) – A partnership with the MYou Youth Garden in Willmar provides exposure and career exploration in agricultural careers to youth in Kandiyohi and McLeod Counties. This project helps to reduce food insecurities for low-income families by allowing youth to work in the gardens and greenhouse. During their time in the program, youth are taught how to grow, manage, and sell a wide variety of vegetables. The overall goal is to empower minority youth through education, work experience, and exposure to local entrepreneurs.

Leadership Development: Learn, Empower, Achieve, Discover (LEAD)

CMJTS provides leadership opportunities to youth through its LEAD program. Youth gain leadership skills utilizing a developed curriculum, which touches upon the development of group rules/culture, self-awareness, leadership, community service, goal setting, taking initiative, time management, coping skills, conflict resolution, and constructive feedback. During this program youth also take part in a group-identified, service-learning project, to give back within their communities and inspire others.

Work Experience/ On-the-Job Training

CMJTS works closely with local employers to provide experiential learning, work-based learning, on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeships, mentoring, job shadows, and work experience opportunities to youth ages 14-24 to help gain the skills and experience necessary to find success in the workplace. Youth are provided work-based learning (WBL) opportunities through placement in entry-level paid work experiences, which provide them with an opportunity to learn basic skills and competencies for success in employment. In addition, work experiences can provide opportunities to:

- Apply academic and technical skills
- Improve motivation and school attendance
- Establish connections between education and work
- Explore careers that match youth's interests, aptitudes, and abilities
- Network and connect with employers
- Increase work-readiness and employability skills
- Develop leadership skills

- Experience a mentoring relationship between youth and employer

Workforce Protégé Program

Workforce Protégé is an internship and mentorship program developed by CMJTS with the assistance of business leaders. For this enhanced opportunity, the business provides youth with weekly mentoring, development of employer-valued skills, along with a supervised work opportunity. The Protégé program focuses on the connection between work and personal success as well as the importance of forming positive relationships with employers and community leaders. Through this program, youth gain valuable industry knowledge from their business mentor along with hands-on exposure to their career pathway. In addition, businesses show their investment by sharing in the cost of the youth participant's wage.

Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) is a rural career and technical education (CTE) pathway initiative to rebuild CTE in West Central Minnesota. The goal of LYFT Pathways is for every secondary student in the region to gain marketable skills through meaningful CTE courses and opportunities which lead to further education and careers that match our region's labor market needs. Through this initiative, CMJTS staff assist school-identified students with vocational exploration and advise them on the steps required to enter careers of interest. They also help the students build workplace skills and coordinate work-based learning opportunities, internships, job shadowing, informational interviews, etc., to give them first-hand knowledge of local jobs, employers, and industries.

Career Pathway Infographics

As part of the RC3 initiative, career pathway infographics were created and are still being developed to complement Occupations in Demand infographics and DEED LMI data tools. The goal is to develop a career pathway based on each career cluster featured on the Minnesota Department of Education's Career Wheel. To date, 14 career cluster/pathway infographics have been created and are in use, as well as four occupations in demand infographics. These infographics are being shared with schools, employers, and jobseekers, including parents. They have proven to be an easy launching point for career exploration and provide a foundation for more in-depth career research. Career pathways in healthcare and manufacturing have been promoted, as these sectors provide a large quantity and wide variety of employment opportunities for workers in Central Minnesota.

Explore the Trades!

In partnership with the Minneapolis Electrical JATC, Apprenticeship Minnesota, CMJTS staff, and the Youth Committee, CMJTS continues to provide apprenticeship exploration opportunities to youth. Through a new initiative, CMJTS will provide a four-week career exploration curriculum (highlighting the trades) that includes career exploration, assessments, labor market information, resources, and connects individuals to available programming. The Minneapolis Electrical JATC will provide an in-person informational session, tour, and hands-on activities at their training site to help youth learn more about career opportunities in the building and electrical trades. Details about the electrical apprenticeship program will be shared, including wages and benefits of apprentice electricians, the types of on-the-job work experiences, the related training provided during the apprenticeship, and the application process.

Intercultural Competence

CMJTS managers and Human Resource Director completed the IDI Qualifying Seminar, an interactive online training in which participants are trained and licensed to use the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). All CMJTS staff, LWDA board members, and the youth committee will complete the inventory to assess and increase intercultural competence. Then, using their personal IDI profile results, an individualized IDI Plan is created to establish a baseline and deliver resources for personal development. In addition, stakeholders will put in place an overall agency plan. The continued goal will be to offer the Intercultural Development Inventory as a resource to local businesses and organizations.

Outreach to Schools (OTS)/Perkins Partnerships

CMJTS is currently partnering with more than 60 organizations and/or schools throughout its 11-county region to provide career counseling services to youth and their families. Schools and/or youth are provided with a list of available opportunities to meet their specific needs in areas such as labor market information, industries in demand, planning for post-secondary school/employment, career exploration and assessments, scheduled tours of CareerForce centers, colleges, and businesses, connections to community resources, and career success skills preparation.

In addition, staff are connected to the local Perkins Consortium and other local agencies/businesses to partner regularly on in-demand career pathways activities, including Construct Tomorrow, IGNITE, SCRUBS camps, and participation in EPIC. These career exploration events provide high school students with hands-on, interactive activities to better understand what it is like to do work associated with their career fields of interest.

WDA 6 – SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

SERVICE AREA: Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Swift, and Yellow Medicine Counties.

MISSION: *“To guide the coordination of services that fully develops the employment potential of youth in Southwest Minnesota.”*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

Anne Johnson
Executive Director
Redwood Falls Chamber and Tourism

LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

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COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES IN SW MINNESOTA:

Outreach to Schools (OTS)

The goal of OTS is to provide services which will impact and improve the way youth view their future opportunities. The focus is to see more individuals achieve training beyond high school in an effort to break the cycle of poverty. The definition of college for OTS purposes is *“Any post high school training opportunity resulting in an earned credential ranging from a certificate to a bachelor’s degree and beyond”*. OTS services are available to youth, young adults, parents, and school districts in the region. The purpose of OTS is to identify and address unmet needs while implementing a strategy for delivering effective educational planning, career counseling and labor market information. The PIC Youth Programs work in partnership with school districts to ensure all youth have access to employment and training services including education and career planning; post-secondary planning; assistance with applications; financial aid; scheduling campus visits; job search; assistance with employment applications; resume writing skills; industry tours; career fairs; career and college readiness days; Career Pathway training, and other related services.

Labor Market Information

Providing labor market information to students, parents, and school counselors to create awareness of regional career opportunities in high-growth, in-demand occupations is critical. Region 5 has developed and distributes labor market infographics that are easy to understand and are shared through innovative and traditional avenues such as school newsletters, websites, career advisors, curriculum, sports rosters, and social media posts. We have partnered with schools, collaboratives, rural development commissions, and more as part of the dissemination process. The launch of the labor market campaign “Know Before You Go” provides infographics on median wage range by education level, annual tuition increases, cost of a degree, and in-demand jobs in the region. These are available in two languages: Spanish and English. [Know Before You Go | Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council \(swmnpic.org\)](http://www.swmnpic.org)

Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) Career Pathways

has provided tools to help students decide, [“What’s Next After High School”](#), which is also the title of a new animated video that explores this topic. “When you ask students this question, they typically say, “College,” largely because that is what is expected of them. Unfortunately, many students aren’t connecting a college education directly to a career choice and may not be making the best decision for their future,” says Tom Hoff with the Southwest West Central Service Cooperative (SWWC). According to Luke Greiner, Regional Labor Market Analyst, with Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, over 60 percent of jobs in Minnesota require a high school diploma, and only about one-third actually require a college degree. “Four-year college is a great option for some, but it’s not for everyone and it’s not necessary for every career,” says Greiner. The video and supporting resources on the LYFT Career Pathways web site help students consider their options after high school by using the [3 E’s Roadmap](#) to EXPLORE their interests and careers, gain EXPOSURE to various jobs and companies, and gain EXPERIENCE, which leads to a variety of career options after high school. One of the resources noted is the “Know Before You Go” campaign, developed by the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council to provide labor market information to students and job seekers. “It’s important for students to make informed decisions about the variety of career options available,” says Carrie Bendix, Executive Director of the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council. We’re proud that this campaign is one of the resources on the LYFT Pathways 3E’s Roadmap.” To learn more, visit the [LYFT Career Pathways](#) website.

Work Based Learning (WBL) Opportunities

Business and youth both benefit from work-based learning (WBL) since the training is tailored specifically to the needs of business and the needs of the participants. The end result of WBL placements is increased

productivity and engagement from the worker. Work-based learning supports a broader pipeline of workers by connecting businesses to a pool of underrepresented populations that may otherwise have difficulty engaging. In order to realize these benefits, business partners are engaged in the career pathway program design and curriculum development to ensure it meets their business needs.

In order for youth to develop the skills necessary to be successful in a work environment, PIC Youth Staff address identified barriers by providing experiential and work-based learning opportunities for youth. Work-based Learning opportunities include work experience, on-the-job training, and internships with an emphasis on high growth, high wage career placements. Youth are matched with an employer based on identified career interests. The majority of the worksites have fewer than 10 employees. This close connection develops into quality mentoring relationships. To foster this bond, staff provides the employer with support and resources related to mentoring tips, practices, and activities.

Career Pathway Initiatives

In addition to providing standard work-experience activities, PIC's Career Pathway initiatives enable youth and young adults to better understand the connection between work and success, to learn basic work habits and skills, to form a positive relationship with leaders in their communities, and to develop meaningful education and/or employment goals through mentoring provided by the employer, PIC staff and partner staff. As part of the PIC Youth and Adult Career Pathway initiatives, an employer agrees to provide youth and young adults a job which will help the participant make the connection between training and long-term employability.

Supervision includes the provision of clear expectations and feedback to the youth and regular communication with PIC staff. The employer also agrees to provide mentoring and create opportunities along the career pathway for future advancement. Through the career pathway trainings, the participants also earn industry recognized certificates such as Certified Nursing Assistant, welding, and others.

Career Expo

Since 2002, Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board has sponsored the regional Career Expo event. Education, workforce agencies and regional businesses cooperate to provide regional "Career Exploration Days" for high school students. The event intends to provide valuable career and education information to high school students, plus highlighted regional businesses, and the type of jobs they provide in our communities. The two expo events serve nearly 2,000 students from local school districts. Over 290 volunteers from the following partners facilitate the event.

- Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium
- The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc.
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College

- Southwest Minnesota State University
- SW/WC Service Cooperative
- Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce
- Marshall Area Chambers of Commerce
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Montevideo, Marshall, and Worthington CareerForce locations
- Regional businesses and service agencies

Please check out the event page to see the full exhibitor list (which can be filtered by site, career field, scholarship availability, etc.) and links to Facebook and photo gallery pictures. Go to: <http://www.swsc.org/Page/274>

Youth Intervention Program (YIP)

YIP is designed to target services to youth transitioning out of foster care. Participants receive career and life skills curriculum to explore and identify positive education, career, and life goals. Participants are also involved in various work-based learning activities.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Innovation Pilot Project

The TANF Innovation Pilot Project was funded through a collaborative effort between the MN Department of Human Services and MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The project is designed to increase employment opportunities for MFIP teen parents, ages 16-24, and younger youth, ages 14-18 who are on the grant in MFIP households. The focus is to assist youth in addressing barriers which impair their ability to make successful transitions from school to work, apprenticeship, the military, or post-secondary education training and improve the individuals long term employability skills. The project builds on successful on-going business driven, short-term training initiatives and offers integrated training, job readiness, job placement services and support services to targeted populations.

Pre- Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) has become a limited use vendor to provide Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) eligible youth services to be successful in the stages of career development, including career awareness; career exploration, career preparation, and career placement, while playing a primary role in helping students and their families navigate the complex multi-agency career pathways system. Funds support a Career Advisor, whose focus is exclusively on students with disabilities, helping them explore career options and develop plans for transition from high school to post-secondary training and/or competitive employment. The Career Advisor provides the link necessary to match students with disabilities to gainful employment through individualized needs assessment and comprehensive services such as career planning, postsecondary career education, systems linkages and service coordination, and other promising practices such as work experiences, career exploration, and work-readiness skills training.

WDA 7 – SOUTH CENTRAL WORKFORCE COUNCIL

SERVICE AREA: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan Counties.

MISSION: *“To Advocate and Provide for the Empowerment, Involvement, Preparation and Employment of Youth in South Central Minnesota.”*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICE STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **“Know Before You Go” Labor Market Campaign:** As result of our regional planning efforts, Southwest and South Central Minnesota embarked on a joint effort to distribute labor market infographics that are easy to understand and can be shared on school newsletters, websites, parent emails and social media posts. The “Know Before You Go” infographics features education and wage range by education level, annual tuition increases, cost of a degree, career pathways in eight different industries, job descriptions, important job qualities, non-traditional training, employment opportunities and work environment. Infographics are shared with local high schools, CareerForce partners, employers and through the “Know Before You Go Thursday!” social media campaign. Infographics are also available in Spanish. The infographics can be found at: <http://www.workforcecouncil.org/labor-market-information/>
- **Career Corner Newsletter:** is a resource shared to local schools to increase career awareness for students and their families. Schools are encouraged to distribute the newsletter through email lists, school newsletters, school website and social media. The newsletter focuses on labor market, career opportunities, career events, employment tips and resources in Region Five. Each newsletter focuses an industry. Past newsletters can be viewed at <http://www.workforcecouncil.org/career-corner-newsletters/>
- **Career Fairs:** The Greater Mankato Career Expo, Area Career Exploration (ACE) held in Fairmont and the Career Fair held in New Ulm are highly interactive educational experiences where business and community volunteers showcase career opportunities to high school sophomores.
- **Tour of Manufacturing Event:** Youth participated in the Tour of Manufacturing where local manufacturers opened their doors for tours and provided information on career opportunities at their business. The Tour of Manufacturing features an electronic Tour of Manufacturing magazine and additional resources to educate students on the opportunities in manufacturing. For more information visit www.tourofmanufacturing.com.
- **Construct Tomorrow:** Youth participated in Construct Tomorrow which is an interactive career fair that provides hands on experiences in each of the construction trades to explore students to union apprenticeship opportunities.
- **Construction Trades Boot Camp:** The South Central Construction Trades Boot Camp is a two week interactive camp that provides hands-on experiences for youth to gain exposure to careers in the constructions trades and learn about union apprenticeship training opportunities. Each day of camp, the featured trades guide students through an interactive, hands-on project. On the final day of camp, youth toured several training centers and participated in a panel discussion with trade representatives.
- **Partners in Career Exploration (PICE):** is a partnership between workforce development and education that places first year graduate students from the Student Counseling Program at Minnesota State University – Mankato in rural school districts. The interns provide individual and group career counseling services to high school students.
- **Skills for Success in Employment, Education and Life:** provides classroom presentations to high school students on a variety of topics including: career assessments, career planning & exploration, labor market information, job search, work readiness skills, post-secondary planning and financial literacy. The Skills for Success video series offers a virtual option to schools.
- **Resource Mapping/Youth Directories:** The Youth Council develops youth directories of resources in the nine-county area. It includes information on child care, counseling, education, employment, health services, housing, libraries, recreation, transportation, youth organizations and youth services. The artwork on the cover of the directories is created by area youth. Visit www.workforcecouncil.org/youth-council/projects/youth-directories/

- **Scrubs Camp:** Youth also attend a three-day Scrubs Camp hosted by Minnesota State University-Mankato which offers an opportunity for high school students to explore health science professions through engaging hands on activities. Health care science careers that will be featured include alternative health, dentistry, EMT, medical lab, nursing, nutrition/wellness, pharmacology, physical therapy, psychology, surgery, regenerative medicine and more.
- **Work Skills Competition:** is an event organized by the Mankato Area Community Interagency Committee for area youth with disabilities. Youth participate in job interviewing, application writing and problem solving activities and judged on their performance by individuals from business and organizations in the community.
- **Youth Intervention Program:** targets services to youth transitioning out of foster care. Youth receive career and life skills curriculum to explore and identify positive education, career and life goals.
- **TANF Youth Project:** Utilizes funding from MN Department of Human Services in partnership with MN Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED) to provide work experiences for teen parents receiving MFIP benefits or youth in MFIP households.
- **Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It. Program:** targets services to BIPOC youth. In addition to providing work readiness activities, work experiences, information on in-demand occupations and career pathways for youth, this program will engage youth and their families, provide cultural awareness to the community, positive role models and leadership opportunities to inspire youth and specialized services for those with disabilities. Because we recognize the strong family connection for BIPOC youth, parents are invited to participate in the initial meetings for program enrollment as well as the group activities. To increase cultural awareness in the community, worksite supervisors participate in cultural awareness training. The program provides positive role models from the BIPOC community that have overcome adversity to demonstrate that it is possible to achieve their dreams.
- **Get Started:** is a virtual four-week course providing training in communication skills, budgeting, health and wellness, and community exploration, which are fundamentals in being successful in life and employment. Youth learn about the importance of effective workplace communication, how to budget their money, the impacts of health and wellness on employment and local community resources that are available. Youth received a stipend for each week of completed assignments. In addition to the topics covered, youth are learning technology skills, dependability, time management skills and building self-confidence through the Get Started course.
- **Financial Fitness Training:** MVAC incorporated financial fitness as a core component of all of our youth employment and training programs. Youth are required to have a savings account at the financial institution of their choice so the pay earned from their work experience can be direct deposited into their savings account. The training focuses on money management, saving money and building assets.
- **Exposure to Demand Occupations:** Youth participate in field trips to area businesses to gain a better understanding of in-demand occupations, employers' expectations and the skills required for the occupation. The SC WorkForce Council also develops a demand occupation lists which includes the wages, education requirements and projections for demand occupations in South Central MN.
- **Non-traditional Careers for Women:** Several partners including Adult Basic Education, Department of Employment & Economic Development, Life Work Planning Center, MRCI WorkSource, Minnesota Valley Action Council, South Central College, and South Central WorkForce Council joined efforts to bring awareness to non-traditional careers for women. The group developed several resources including a brochure on non-traditional careers, an assessment to determine if someone is interested in a non-traditional career and steps to take to enter a non-traditional career. The group developed a non-traditional careers page on the South Central WorkForce Council website where these resources are available. The website page can be found at: <http://www.workforcecouncil.org/nontradcareers/>
- **Framework for Workforce Development:** was developed by the SC WorkForce Council to outline operational principles and goals for services to all the populations in the worker pipeline. The Youth Council developed the following focus for youth services:
 - ▶ Support career exploration opportunities that provide youth with knowledge of demand/STEM occupations.
 - ▶ Support work experience opportunities that connect youth to local employers & teach work readiness skills.
 - ▶ Support community connections through service learning & civic engagement.
 - ▶ Support all youth achieving a high school diploma or GED.
 - ▶ Support occupational training that leads to a credential.
 - ▶ Identify service gaps for at-risk youth and leverage resources.
- **Youth Council Members:** The South Central Youth Council includes community, education, probation, business, labor, parents and youth representatives.

WDA 8 – SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, INC.

SERVICE AREA: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, and Wabasha Counties.

MISSION: *“To Develop and Advance the Workforce of Southeastern Minnesota, in order to promote economic prosperity in the region.”*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

Rotating

LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

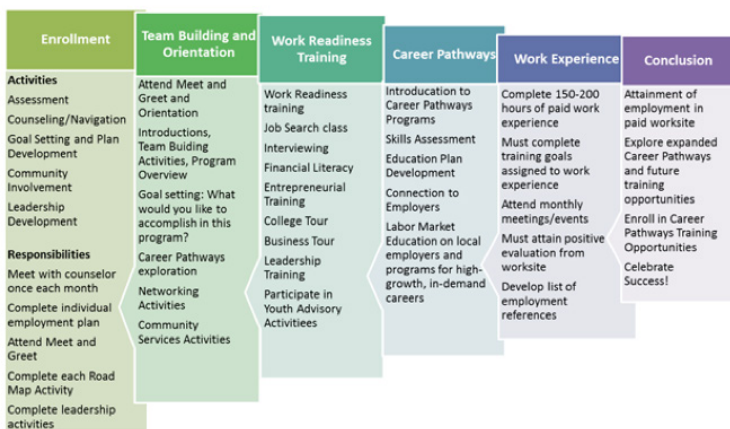
- **The Emerging Workforce youth committee** encourages local private – sector employer representatives to become actively involved with WDI programming. Employer representatives are available to speak on work-related topics to youth groups and local educational entities. A primary focus of this committee is to bring workforce relevance to educational activities, and to inform youth about in-demand industries and opportunities. Youth enrolled in WDI programs are also encouraged to join this committee.
 - **The Academy concept** of pre-employment training offered by WDI focuses on assisting students who are interested in either entering a career or moving up the career ladder. Participants explore the opportunities that exist and receive guidance on entering their chosen field. Participants also have the opportunity to develop and practice in-demand skills specific to that field which builds confidence and prepares them for obtaining and keeping those positions.
 - **Youthbuild program:** A partnership with Rochester Alternative Learning Center. 10 youth per semester earn school credit and a work experience wage learning the basic skills of carpentry and construction. Their skills are put to use building structures (such as equipment sheds) for local schools and community agencies.
 - **Career Pathways:** Youth Career Planners use a variety of information regarding in-demand careers, local workforce and employer needs, labor market information and knowledge of career pathways programs to assist in career counseling for their young adults. We have a robust Career Pathways program in Southeast Minnesota, including partnerships with area school districts, community and technical Colleges, Adult Basic Education partners and employers. Our primary programs are focused on healthcare careers but we have several sectors at the table (manufacturing, IT) to discuss past and future opportunities within the realm of Career Pathways.
 - **Targeted Jobs List:** Southeast Minnesota WDI also uses a Targeted Jobs List, approved by our Workforce Development Board each year, to determine in-demand and living wage careers in our area. Counselors use this list to determine appropriate trainings for job seekers that will result in a successful high-growth living wage occupation.
- **The SE MN Workforce Development Board** has an innovative committee structure based on industrial sectors and careers that are in demand. Contact the WDA for a copy of the strategic plan for the LWDB and the Emerging Workforce Committee (youth) goals. For more information visit: <https://www.careerforcemn.com/so/group/684>
 - **Southeast Minnesota Best Places to Work Award:** Workforce Development, Inc. honors businesses each year as the Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota. The Best Places to Work is a national program that recognizes the best employers in local communities. Workforce Development, Inc. surveys companies and conducts site visits within Freeborn, Mower, Rice, Steele, Goodhue, Olmsted, Houston, Dodge, Fillmore and Wabasha Counties to identify the Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota.

- **Bridges to Careers** is a collaborative effort between Hawthorne Adult Basic Education, Rochester Community and Technical College, Workforce Development, Inc. and area employers who are dedicated to a mission that meets the needs of Rochester Minnesota’s diverse community and the employment market. Through education and career coaching students within the program are empowered to pursue successful and fulfilling careers. Students who enter the Bridges to Careers program work in partnership with a Career Navigator to identify and address potential barriers they may have to going to school or attaining a successful and rewarding career.

Students take college prep courses through Adult Basic Education to ensure success in future educational endeavors. Essential skills are addressed such as reading, writing, math, and technology courses, as well as career-specific classes. Bridges to Careers offer a College Transition Advisor to aid students who continue their coursework at Rochester Community & Technical College. The Transition Specialist assists them with the application, registration, financial aid processes, and provides a support structure where the student can succeed.

- **Career/Transition Fairs** are held throughout the SE MN WorkForce Center System. Most often these are industry specific and offer youth an opportunity to explore careers that they are considering and determine skills and training needed to secure this career. Youth are selected to attend these fairs based on their interest and readiness for this option. High schools and post-secondary institutions are actively involved, with some serving as event hosts.

- **Multiple programs and funding streams:** It is important to establish relationships/partnerships based on trust, open communication and mutual respect. The goal of WDI is to encourage and empower youth, their families and mentors to take ownership of their participation in our efforts to foster leadership and work readiness skills. Below is a “roadmap” that outlines program goals and services:



- **Steele County Works Partnership:** In Owatonna, United Way has begun the creation of a strong partnership between schools and businesses, connecting local youth to employment opportunities in the area, by the appointment of a youth career counselor from Workforce Development, Inc. This career counselor meets with students 1:1 to create career plans for after high school. Each student meets with the career counselor for an initial assessment of where they are in terms of planning. Many students who are participating have little to no idea of what they will be doing following high school graduation. Through use of career assessments (MCIS), work skills readiness practices (resume creation, interview preparation, employer expectations), and connecting students to pertinent information regarding their career hopes (scholarships, internship/apprenticeships, and networking), the hope is to assist every student who participates in the program with having a better understanding of their possibilities for after high school.

- **The Youth Intervention Program** is offered through the Rochester WorkForce Center. Activities are designed to provide alternatives to students who have been involved with Corrections or Court Services. Students can earn credit toward community service hours or money to pay restitution fees as a result of their involvement with the Youth Programs that WDI offers. Support Service funding is available to assist youth with barriers such as transportation, and work uniforms.

- **e-Mentoring connections** are made between students and local business partners. Matches are made based on the students sector of interest and students are given four weeks’ worth of prompts and questions to email their mentors with. At the end of the e-mentoring experience students and mentors are encouraged to connect in person.

WDA 9 – HENNEPIN/CARVER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

SERVICE AREA: Carver and Hennepin Counties (excluding City of Minneapolis)

PURPOSE STATEMENT: *The Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board fosters individual and family economic well-being through the development of meaningful career pathways and employment opportunities, provides a skilled talent pipeline to our employer partners through the strategic investment of workforce development resources and the building of collaborative partnerships, and works alongside community organizations to identify and recruit community members to participate in workforce development services based on the workplace requirements expressed by our employer partners as well as the needs and interests of the community.*

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES – HENNEPIN COUNTY:

Hennepin-Carver partners with four providers of youth career development services across suburban Hennepin County and Carver County. Tree Trust, BrookLynk, and Carver County funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Carver County, Tree Trust, BrookLynk, and Ka Joog provide services funded by the state's Minnesota Youth Program. Hennepin-Carver maintains a commitment to paid summer and year-round work experience learning for youth funded through state and federal programs. These services can be accessed by participants in one of three summer components and two year-round options:

Summer

1) Youth Conservation Corps: Youth work on teams of eight, with a dedicated supervisor, completing park improvement projects for local nature centers, local park districts, or other public hosts. Host sites provide all materials used to complete projects (which can run into tens of thousands of

dollars of commitment), youth learn by doing, both practical application of team building, employer expectations, and landscape construction.

- 2) Internships:** Youth are assigned to local organizations to provide summer and year-round help. Youth gain valuable practical work readiness, skill enhancement as well as income.
- 3) Job Coached Sites:** Working with youth's home school district, participants are provided school funded job coaches and transportation; enabling severely challenged youth the opportunity to gain valuable paid work experience.

Year-round

- 1) Case Management:** Case managers work with in- and out-of-school youth supporting their efforts to obtain high school credentials and explore post-secondary or employment placement. Youth are also offered paid work experience opportunities during in-school internships and summer community placements.
- 2) Young Adult Conservation Corps:** This program offers a paid work experience corps model for out-of-school youth. Teams of 5 participate in intense training and public works projects, with one day per week devoted to case managed interviewing and employment readiness skill practice such as conflict management, resume and application completion, financial literacy and team building. The program offers a 12-week term with an opportunity to apply for an additional 12 weeks on advanced crew placement.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES – HENNEPIN COUNTY:

- **TeamTech:** Youth working on conservation crews are also provided access to four computer lessons (at the job site) using mobile computer labs. The lessons are focused on Personal Budgeting (spreadsheet application), Resumes, Job Applications, and Career Discovery. All lessons are assembled into a digital portfolio and awarded at a season ending awards ceremony.
- **High School Credit:** Working with local education partners who award elective High School credit for successful completion of Summer Program. Credit is based upon a commitment to attendance and successful supervisor evaluation; youth are eligible to receive up to two credits for summer participation.

- **Award Ceremony:** All Conservation Corps youth are invited to attend an Awards Celebration where each youth receives a certificate of commendation. Youth also receive a copy of their portfolio (TeamTech Lessons). Youth are eligible for Governor’s Award (one per crew signed by the Governor), as well as awards and gift certificates for perfect attendance.

- **Tree Trust** focuses on sustainable skills for youth interested in pursuing competitive employment and/or higher education opportunities. Additionally, Tree Trust also helps youth interested in obtaining short or long term federally recognized credentials. These credentials include, Tree Care Industry of America (TCIA), Home Builders Institute (HBI) and OSHA-10.

Internship placements are under way for enrolled youth through local business participation. By sourcing initial placements in already established worksites and applying site recruitment staff resources to expand the site selection, Tree Trust reshapes the traditional youth placement opportunity offered to include more private sector placements.

- **BrookLynk** provides supervisor training that focuses on mentoring youth, cultural competencies and implicit bias training. As part of the employer recruitment, employers for BrookLynk commit to paying 100% of the youth wages and through that demonstrate a proven commitment to the community and workforce development. In addition to summer work experiences, youth receive work readiness skills training in resume writing, interviewing and networking skills, communications, diversity at work, and more.
- **Get Ready!** BrookLynk’s annual work readiness training program, prepares hundreds of participants for their summer work experience placements by training them in resumes, job applications, interviewing, networking, professional communication and other topics that prepare them to successfully navigate the workplaces of our employer partners. This program was offered virtually in 2021.
- **Ka Joog** offers participants paid internships emphasizing high-growth career fields, individual case management and career counseling services, mentorships, and group classes that build soft skills. They help graduating youth launch careers by offering paid internships with local employers, classroom education, and mentorships with culturally-attuned professionals. Their staff, leadership, and services are culturally competent for East African communities and can be beneficial to any marginalized and at-risk youth.

EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES – CARVER COUNTY:

- **Southwest Metro Educational Cooperative:** The Southwest Metro Educational Cooperative operates a Youthbuild Program that teaches construction skills and offers academic credit to youth based on the hours they work and the schoolwork they complete. Youth counselors also work directly with New Beginnings (part of SW Metro Educational Cooperative that serves pregnant and parenting teens).
- **Three Rivers Park District:** Youth are placed at Gale Woods farm (part of Three Rivers Park District). They work on planting and harvesting vegetables and gardens and work a bit with the public giving tours.
- **District #287:** District #287 (combines 17 suburban school districts in the West Metro area) refers youth with disabilities and while county pays the youth’s wage, the district provides job coaches for the youth at their worksites. This arrangement is the same as the Job Coached Sites referenced above for Hennepin County.
- **Agencies Serving Homeless Youth:** Hope House and Launch Ministry are two agencies in Carver County serving homeless youth. There is a direct referral process from the agencies to youth programming.
- **Carver County Probation and Health and Human Services:** The Carver County Youth Counselor meets regularly with juvenile probation workers and workers from child and family department for referrals across programs.
- **Community Colleges and Carver County Schools:** Carver County staff are developing partnerships with both Hennepin Tech in Eden Prairie and Normandale in Bloomington to create a cross referral program from colleges to youth programming and other county services, and from the county to the colleges for youth that need educational services. Carver County is working with Carver County Schools focusing on developing career pathways into the trade jobs.
- **Sites and placement:** Carver County has successfully placed youth internally with Carver County Health and Human Services and with multiple community sites.

WDA 10 – MINNEAPOLIS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

SERVICE AREA: City of Minneapolis

MISSION STATEMENT: *“To help youth and young adults learn academic, life and work skills, identify career paths and achieve meaningful employment opportunities.”*

Minneapolis Youth Committee Vision: *The Minneapolis Youth Council provides leadership to grow tomorrow’s workforce and build competitive advantage for Minneapolis youth, employers and the economy.*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **Workforce Innovation And Opportunity Act (WIOA):** City of Minneapolis has partnered with six providers to offer services to young adults with a variety of supportive needs that include but are not limited to, unemployment, homelessness, living in poverty, under educated, under employed. This network of providers, which include the following organizations: American Indian OIC (AIOIC), AVIVO, East Side Neighborhood Services (ESNS), EMERGE, HIRED and Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) all operate in many community based establishments to reach the wide population of underserved young adults in the city. Being place based in homeless shelters, schools, faith-based establishments and community centers, allows there to be a full comprehensive approach to how youth are served through WIOA. One of the innovative ways our providers have served young adults is to offer services within a specific demographic community. AIOIC offers supportive services in community to

address the specific needs of American Indian youth as well as offering onsite training open to the public and a myriad of other services for education to employment growth.

- **Step Up:** In order to provide as many youth as possible with a total summer employment experience, a wide range of partners within the Minneapolis employer community, including faith based organizations, local educational agencies, private sector business and community-based organizations, team to lead the effort of youth engagement and workforce development.
- ▶ **Education and Specialized Trainings:** Step Up interns have a variety of training opportunities to help them develop their academic, professional, and life skills. Each component of Step Up offers a developmentally appropriate set of enhancements, but all focus on training experiences that help youth reach their goals. Some training classes focus on career exposure, college preparation, finance, or entrepreneurship, others teach basic academics, STEM curriculum, or health and nutrition. Trainings offered to participants include:
 - ▶ **Healthcare:** Youth participants placed in internships in the healthcare field with a specialized, 6-hour training led by Project for Pride in Living and healthcare professionals. Interns heard from industry professionals, learned about HIPAA regulations, customer service specific to healthcare, and the variety of career paths available in the industry.
 - ▶ **Technical Career Exposure and Training:** Interns are offered an opportunity to complete a series of online training modules to enhance their Excel skills and prepare for more challenging positions down the road. Excel is an essential skill for the workplace but generally not taught in our schools. Certification is available for youth that complete all modules offered. A partnership with the Silicon North Stars program offers a 5-day technology camp. The trip included meeting with internet and technology leaders from top companies, startups, and venture capital funds. The youth participated in an intensive series of lectures, tours, discussions, and group activities at companies throughout the Twin Cities. The camp concludes with a group project in which the students work on teams to create and pitch their own startup ideas to a crowd of tech professionals.

- **College Exposure and Preparation:** Step Up Level 2 interns are invited to Golden Gopher Day at the University of Minnesota campus to learn more about college and help them prepare for post-secondary education. Activities included a presentation about UMN, a panel discussion with current students, a motivational speaker, a campus tour, breakout sessions on specific colleges, and a chance to practice networking skills.
- **Business and Professional Skills:** During Financial Services Careers Day, company volunteers spend a day with interns to talk about the wide range of careers available in financial services and the underlying skills that are essential to success. The event features a panel representing distinct areas of financial services, a seminar focused on business etiquette & customer service, and a speed career networking exercise with industry representatives.
- **Academic Skills:** In 2020, eligible Step Up participants had the opportunity to earn academic credit for their training and work experience. The Step Up Credit program component is led in partnership with Project for Pride and Living (PPL) to align Step Up curriculum with the Minneapolis Public Schools' credit career readiness seminar.
- **Financial Literacy:** Financial literacy is an increasingly important skill for our young people. Step Up has embedded financial literacy training and exposure through the work experience. Step Up has several strategies in place to strengthen the financial skills of interns. As part of their internship experience, Step Up Level 2 interns are offered an opportunity to expand their financial knowledge at the annual U.S. Bank Financial Education Day event run by U.S. Bank trainers. Hosted at the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Business, interns learned about banking, budgeting, and credit to help oversee their personal finances. Students leave this event with increased insight into how to manage their Step Up earnings and plan for their future.
- **Minneapolis Partners for Youth Conference:** The goals of this annual free conference are to provide a professional development opportunity for youth serving practitioners by sharing youth development strategies and to build a foundation for ongoing networking, learning, and community- wide resource sharing. Minneapolis Employment and Training, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board and the Minneapolis Health Department organize this yearly event with an array of community partners.
- **Minneapolis Teen Job and Opportunity Fair:** This annual teen job and opportunity fair provides area youth a welcoming venue to connect with employers and organizations offering training, education, employment, and volunteer experiences. Minneapolis Youth Congress Employment Committee members assist not only with event planning, promotion and management, but also with creating and delivering an interactive workshop to open the Fair. Teens arrive prior to the event opening for a Prep Rally, updating their resumes, researching companies and applying to openings on-line. Additional event partners include Achieve, Hennepin County Libraries, Hennepin County Human Resources, the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development, and the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board.

WDA 12 – ANOKA COUNTY JOB TRAINING CENTER

SERVICE AREA: Anoka County

MISSION STATEMENT: *The Standing Youth Committee collaborates to share resources and deliver services to Anoka County young adults (ages 14 – 24) by empowering them to achieve skills, knowledge and confidence resulting in their educational, workplace and personal success.*

OUR VISION: *Empowering Young Adults to accomplish their goals through education and gaining experience leading to a successful career*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **Virtual and In-Person Career Services:** ACJTC is offering a hybrid model of both in-person and virtual career services for youth to explore careers and review online assessments or job search strategies. Youth are offered workshops including resume review, Career Exploration, and how to build a LinkedIn profile. Youth are also informed of CareerForce services, and the online tools associated with CareerForce. Counselors have access to phone, drop boxes, Web Ex, text messaging and email to deliver virtual career services.
- **An Inter-Agency Collaborative** is established between CareerForce in Blaine, Anoka Technical College (ATC) and Metro North Adult Basic Education, Anoka Ramsey Community College

(ARCC), Anoka Hennepin Technical High School (AHTHS), Professional & Workforce Training and Secondary Technical Education Program (STEP) to identify and connect with youth who can benefit from case management, educational, financial, and transitional supports of the Empowers Program. Partnering staff from each of these agencies meet annually to ensure strong communications and linkages are maintained to better serve the young people in our area.

- **Youth at Work:** ACJTC has a current grant that provides paid work experiences and assist with training for in-demand certifications and/or credentials. Each year we place youth in unique work experience sites that align with their interests, education, and transportation options.
- **Pre-ETS Vendor (assisting youth with disabilities):** Referrals from Vocational Rehabilitation Services to serve youth with disabilities, in-school youth (grades 9-12), that live in Anoka County and are attending secondary school are placed in work experiences in an integrated environment in the community at both public and private sector employers. The goal is for youth to gain confidence, develop job specific skills and positive work habits while preparing for future career opportunities.

Individualized job placement varies based on the skills, interests, and abilities of the youth. Empowers staff work with VRS staff to review assessment results to find appropriate placements. Staff consider where the student lives and available transportation options. Work experiences generally last 12 weeks with an average of 20 hours a week. Jobs are located at locations such as: YMCA, Head Start, area schools, County departments, nursing homes, hospitals, and private sector employers. A variety of jobs are available including recreations aids, teacher's assistants, park workers, crew members, maintenance, childcare, retail, library aides, office and clerical.

- **Future Leaders (developing diverse communities):** This leadership and paid work experience opportunity is possible through Anoka-Hennepin District 11 which serves young people representing diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds that are primarily juniors and seniors. These high school students are matched with elementary schools where they tutor children who have been identified as below grade expectation or at risk of falling behind in school. During the school year, the Future Leaders are also given instruction by SAA's

(Student Achievement Advisor provided by the school district) that assist them in working through issues that are challenging for youth of color.

- Reducing Youth Homelessness through Partnerships:** Empowers has ongoing communication with the YMCA regarding program services and receives many referrals from the Y's Youth Outreach and Intervention Programs and the new StaY Safe program targeting homeless youth. In addition, staff have a good working relationship with Hope4Youth, a local drop-in center for homeless youth, and Stepping Stone Shelter which is an adult homeless shelter providing emergency services for young adults age 18 and older. Staff maintain weekly hours at Hope4Youth and provide 8 hours a week of intensive case management services to youth housed at Hope Place (youth shelter). Empowers also works closely with Job Corp staff which serves a high population of youth that struggle with homelessness or have run away. The YMCA, Hope4Youth and Job Corp all have representatives on the Youth Standing Committee.
- Internships/Work Based Learning:** Paid internships are developed for youth who are participating in a Career Pathway, Postsecondary and exploratory career opportunities. These opportunities expose youth to occupations in demand with potential for long term growth in a local industry sector. Internships are aligned with credential bearing training opportunities to accelerate the contextual learning and earning track. Anoka County Career Connections trainings have committed employer partners who are positioned to recruit and hire successful training program graduates. Staff utilize established relationships with private employers and non-profits, including county and government agencies to create job opportunities for youth that have little or no work experience. Work experiences are designed to align with student's interests and areas of study. Empowers staff works closely with local employers to develop work experiences, internships, mentoring opportunities, job shadowing, OJT's and pre-apprenticeships.
- Enhanced Recruitment of Dropouts:** Empowers staff work closely with Metro North Adult Basic Education and local ALCs to identify youth who have aged out of the secondary school system, are high school dropouts and/or at risk of dropping out and who can benefit from additional supports to obtain either a diploma or GED. Empowers staff have ongoing communication with the local YMCA's Youth Outreach Program, Hope4Youth, our onsite MFIP and SNAP employment services, low-income housing

partners and with perspective at-risk youth visiting our Career Lab as general customers. Targeted mailings and e-mail blasts are sent from our partners with our marketing materials to identify youth that have dropped out that may be interested in returning to school.

- Connections with MFIP and SNAP partners:** MFIP and SNAP programs are co-located at CareerForce in Blaine allowing for ongoing regular communication between staff working in our various programs. All program staff are trained and able to navigate the myriad of program rules and policies that affect youth through the age of 24. Co-enrolling youth is done whenever possible to help leverage resources between the programs. Staff work to identify potential youth that are eligible for program services during the SNAP orientations. Once identified, they are given information about the Empowers program and a point of contact.
- Youth in Foster Care/Aging-Out of Foster Care:** Providing employment and training services to youth in foster care and aging out of the foster care system is a priority for Empowers. Staff have developed close working relationships with social workers in the Anoka County Foster Care Unit which ensures ongoing referrals of youth most in need. Anoka County Foster Care staff are represented on our Standing Youth Committee.
- Financial Literacy:** Financial literacy is embedded in the work experience, internship and on-the-job opportunities coordinated and/or funded in part by the ACJTC programs. Each month Youth Counselors create tips and email them to their caseload on financial topics such as savings, spending, setting up accounts, credit cards and credit reports. Additionally, Anoka employs a "pay-for-performance model" in our work experience program. Meaning, we provide a fifty cent per hour increase after a satisfactory or better performance evaluation from a paid work experience activity.
- Perkins Partnership:** Empowers staff are connected to the local Perkins Consortium and partner on a regular basis on activities, events, data analysis and labor market trends related to guiding and providing in-demand career pathway preparation for young adults in our service area and across the state.
- Assessments Used:** Empowers uses many assessments including the Self-Directed Search (SDS), ONET Profiler, various forms of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), the GAIN, the GED, the Accuplacer and assessments found on My Next Move.org and ONET.

- **Career Fair and Hiring Events:** We offer On-Site Hiring events two times a month. We also offer specialized Hiring Events in the fields of Health Care, Manufacturing and Construction and specialized and Hiring Events for Women, Fair Chance (People with a criminal background) and Veterans and new this year a Career Fair just for young people. Each event highlights various opportunities in high-growth high-demand occupations including employer panels and opportunities for youth to meet one-on-one with potential employers. Extensive efforts are made for each event to promote and market these events to all the area high schools, charter schools, alternative schools, transitional school, and youth serving agencies
- **Transportation Solutions Partner:** Empowers staff refer young adults in need of transportation assistance for secured employment in the form of a one-time grant that can be used

WDA 14 – DAKOTA-SCOTT WORKFORCE SERVICES

SERVICE AREA: Dakota and Scott Counties

MISSION STATEMENT: *“To provide leadership and support to community partners in fostering the educational and employment success of youth.”*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- The Dakota-Scott Youth Committee has a broad referral network, consisting of representatives from Community Corrections, Social Services, community organizations (non-profits), school districts, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, unions, CareerForce staff, local businesses, colleges, libraries, and youth.
- Dakota County partners with two youth career development service providers. Tree Trust provides services funded by the state’s Minnesota Youth Program (MYP, summer), while Hired provides services funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, year-round).

Summer – Tree Trust

- Tree Trust’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) offers young people a nine-week, hands-on, paid work experience. Youth have the option of either the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) doing outdoor environmental improvement projects or an individual internship working with a local employer partner. They receive training around goal setting, budgeting and financial literacy, career exploration, completing job applications, and creating resumes.

Year-round – Hired

- Hired provides coaching, support, and training to help youth and young adults complete a diploma or GED, explore careers, and gain employment. They work closely with schools, juvenile probation, social service agencies, and other community organizations.
 - ▶ **Educational Assistance** - Support for high school or GED completion, followed by post-secondary exploration, planning and enrollment.
 - ▶ **Workplace Readiness and Job Placement** - One-to-one instruction on workplace skills and the job search process.
 - ▶ **Internships** - Placement into subsidized work experience opportunities aligned with long-term career goals.
 - ▶ **Wraparound Support Services** - Financial assistance related to job search and education.

Scott County operates year-round MYP and WIOA Youth programs by partnering with local schools, non-profits, training providers, and juvenile probation to build connections with eligible youth. Scott County provides 1:1 counseling with an employment counselor, paid work experience opportunities, tuition assistance, support services, career exploration, job preparedness, referrals to GED/credit recovery programs, and other community resources.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES:

- **Recognizing Youth Achievement** – Tree Trust hosts an annual summer celebration to highlight the accomplishments of program participants who work on landscape crews or at individual sites throughout the Dakota County area. Youth crews work at city and county parks on various projects including staircases, retaining walls, benches, bocce ball courts, hockey rinks, wildlife observation decks, and other general landscaping projects. Youth can also work in internships at employer host sites. Tree Trust’s programs include career exploration and other job readiness skill building and youth have an opportunity to earn pay raises for

positive performance. Parents, local officials, project partners, and Youth Committee members are invited to the celebration event where youth with perfect attendance receive special certificates and several governor’s awards are given to crew members that exemplify strong leadership and teamwork skills.

- **Recognizing Youth Champions** – The Excellence in Youth Employment Services Awards recognize organizations or programs, an employer or an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to and effectiveness in preparing young people ages 14-24 to enter the workforce. Two awards are made: one for Dakota and one for Scott County. The honorees receive their award at the WDB’s annual Legislative and Employer Recognition Event in front of an audience of area legislators, employers, and community leaders. Additionally, press releases are issued to provide additional recognition for their achievements. In 2022, Dakota Electric and the Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board sponsored and presented the awards.
- **Getting Credit** – In partnership with the Southwest Metro Intermediate School 288, Scott County offered youth needing credits the opportunity to participate in YouthBuild. Work readiness skills were built into the development of each worksite. Worksite supervisors evaluated each youth’s accomplishment in areas such as: interpersonal, information, systems, technology, personal qualities, basic skills and thinking skills. In Dakota County, Tree Trust and HIRED provided career related services and academic enrichment to youth resulting in school credit.
- **Financial Literacy training for youth participants** – Counselors/programs in both Dakota and Scott County work with youth to develop a personal budget that exhibits their gross pay, taxes and other deductions and net pay. Youth decide how much of their total earnings they would like to save and how much they would like to spend. Youth develop an understanding of the financial consequences of missing a day of work. Youth develop an estimated cost of the specific landscaping/construction project the crew is working on, with the approximate cost of materials.
- **Career Success Program** – The Career Success Program is a Dakota County Community Services collaborative that exposes economically disadvantaged youth and those with significant barriers due to family circumstances and/or involvement in the justice system to job-hunting skills

and career options, while offering activities that can be added to resumes and job applications. In the program, youth complete career assessments, tour possible employment sites, do a community service projects, and master a specific life/employment skill such as First Aid/CPR. The Dakota-Scott Youth Committee has provided funding support for various experiential learning experiences. In addition, Youth Committee members participated in program sessions which provided meaningful support and a deeper understanding of the youth impacted.

- **Traitify** – The Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board (WDB), along with support from the Youth Committee, launched Traitify; a personality assessment tool that recommends careers, jobs, and education based on personality and preference data. Traitify is accessible on the Dakota and Scott County websites, providing free unlimited access to all residents of Dakota and Scott County. It is being used (in addition to existing career exploration and counseling) to enhance program services related to career awareness, education, and employment. Nearly 12,000 assessments have been completed since procurement in 2018.
- **Teen Job Fair** – – This annual event is a partnership between the Dakota County Library, Dakota County Workforce Services/CareerForce, Dakota County Social Services, local school districts, and youth. It's designed to connect teens with job opportunities, grow awareness about county services, strengthen the local workforce, and bolster the economy. Leading up to the event, staff conduct a workshop series geared towards teens to promote and prepare them for the event. Local youth were actively involved with the planning/promotion. Approximately 200 attended the 2023 event.
- **Monthly and Bi-Monthly Newsletters** – Monthly newsletters provide information relating to workforce development opportunities, events, jobs, scholarships, etc. In addition, bi-monthly bonus material includes information about Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters, & Pathways. Each features a different career field, clusters within that field, potential pathways, and careers, Q&As from local professionals, and more. Both are distributed to teachers, career counselors, youth program participants/administrators, and others working with school-aged youth across the Dakota and Scott County areas.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – Dakota County utilizes CDBG funding to support two local initiatives targeting low income youth:
 - ▶ Internships at Dakota County Library locations
 - ▶ Expanded occupational skills training and certification opportunities
- **Partnerships with Schools and Community Organizations** – Staff conduct virtual and in-person workshops with information about CareerForce and workforce related topics/services to students, educators, and other community organizations. Examples include:
 - ▶ In collaboration with Dakota County Libraries, staff conduct Teen Job Skills workshops with topics including “How to Create Your First Resume”, “How to Prepare for Your First Interview”, and more.
 - ▶ Staff meet with students and educators at the Dakota County Area Learning School (DCALS) to present information about Career Exploration Resources. This is part of an on-going partnership between Dakota County Workforce Services, DCALS, and 360 Communities.
 - ▶ Staff presented an overview of workforce/ CareerForce services at the Dakota County Technical College (DCTC) - Counselor and Community Partner event. CareerForce and DCTC, as well as Inver Grove Community College, partner on a regular basis with recruiters from both Colleges participating in Educator of the Day events at CareerForce in West St. Paul – meeting with jobseekers to answer questions about current training opportunities, FAFSA, DREAM Act and other resources to assist in paying for college.
- **Dakota County Workforce Services** (in partnership with Financial Empowerment) met with students participating in the TRIO South Minnesota Leadership Conference hosted at Inver Hills Community College. A Workforce Specialist met with students to discuss career exploration resources, labor market information, cost of living tools, and Traitify to help them begin preparing for their future after high school.

- Construct Tomorrow** – Canterbury Park hosted a Construct Tomorrow event to introduce construction and building trades to students and educators through experiential learning. Attendees had the opportunity to talk to young and experienced professionals about working in the trades and could try hands-on activities that simulated what it's like to work on a real jobsite! The Shakopee Fire Department also took part, conducting a live burn trailer to demonstrate the massive difference sprinklers can make in case of a fire. The event was a huge success, with approximately 700 students/educators taking part. This event is in partnership with the Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board.
- Business Engagement** – CareerForce in Dakota and Scott Counties respond to the needs of businesses by facilitating connections with job seekers (both youth and adult). Access to demand-driven careers is made through hiring events, Employer of the Day events, industry exposure events, and personalized outreach.

WDA 15 – RAMSEY COUNTY WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

SERVICE AREA: Ramsey County

MISSION STATEMENT: *The Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County is be the catalyst for comprehensive workforce development strategies that address both employer and job seeker needs.*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

The Youth Committee has identified seven primary strategic goals as part of the current Youth Committee Work plan. These goals include:

1. Continue to oversee WIOA Youth Programs and Plans
2. Promote and support the Youth Works! Initiative to increase youth/young adult employment
3. Engage with youth/young adults, employers, and community-based partners in Ramsey County
4. Develop employer support strategies in partnership with the City of Saint Paul
5. Gather nominations, evaluate, and present the Vern Vick Memorial Award
6. Showcase and learn about youth and young adult organizations
7. Assess and grow committee membership, including the addition of a youth member

CITY OF SAINT PAUL PARTNERSHIPS

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions (WFS) is strengthening our partnership with the City of Saint Paul's youth employment program, Right Track, through strategic planning. Both WFS and Right Track provide employment supports and opportunities to local youth and young adults; additional coordination between providers will ultimately increase the benefits provided to Ramsey County youth and young adults. This includes increased focus on serving justice-involved youth and young adults, many of whom experience some of the greatest challenges in finding safe and meaningful employment and education. Additionally, the team is exploring other methods for expanding internships and other opportunities through the Right Track model to other Ramsey County youth. Finally, the WFS and Right Track teams are working together to move forward on a messaging and marketing campaign to change how the local business community views and supports youth employment programs in Ramsey County and Saint Paul. This work will support the broader youth employment service ecosystem.

Another example of partnership with Saint Paul is the Young Adult Career Academy (YACA). YACA is a Ramsey County & Saint Paul public sector internship program, led by WFS and contracted partner, Project Restore MN. In this ten-week program, YACA provides young adults, ages 18-24, with exposure to public sector careers, networking opportunities, and work readiness skills. Participants complete rotations through eight County & City departments (from Public Works to Public Health to the Emergency Communications Center) to learn about different opportunities in local government. The Career Academy is intentional about enhancing access to County, City, and other public service jobs, as well as supporting young adults while they form the professional networking connections that are so critical to enhancing opportunity. Built into this internship program are also professional development sessions and opportunities such as meetings with elected officials and other leaders, tours of local facilities (such as the medical examiner, recycling center, etc.), receiving headshots and LinkedIn profiles, and sessions with Ramsey County and St Paul Human Resources to learn how to apply for jobs in those systems. Finally, following the completion of the rotations, interns can choose to stay in an extended internship with a specific department that matches their career interests.

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with culturally specific, community-based organizations are essential to eliminating

the racial and ethnic disparities in employment and education that youth and young adults of color experience in Ramsey County. These partnership-driven initiatives include an increased focus on serving local Hmong & Karen, Latinx, American Indian, and East African communities. In alignment with Ramsey County's strategic priority of "advancing racial and health equity and shared community power", WFS has executed contracts for youth employment services with four BIPOC-led organizations. These organizations, whose staff reflect the youth being served, provide services to young people through culturally-specific programming. Early outcomes indicate that Ramsey County's youth outcomes (employment & educational accomplishments) are increasing/improving amid these initiatives.

RAMSEY COUNTY YOUTH WORKS!

Ramsey County Youth Works! is a county-wide youth employment partnership initiative led by Ramsey County WFS and the Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) Youth Committee. The goal of this initiative is to "ensure alignment and coordination among the larger youth and young adult employment ecosystem to most effectively support young people (ages 14-24) in gaining access to employment, training resources and career pathways opportunities". Youth Works! members have already leveraged their connections with and within key stakeholder entities in Ramsey County – including school districts, government agencies, for-profit businesses, and community-based organizations – to promote networking events, educational programs, and employment opportunities where young people can learn, earn, and lead in their communities. Furthermore, through Youth Works!, Ramsey County recently began providing a monthly orientation for community providers and organizations to learn about the youth employment ecosystem and distributing a monthly newsletter to provide updates, opportunities, and data to partners.

RAMSEY COUNTY MEANS BUSINESS

Ramsey County Means Business (www.ramseycoutymeansbusiness.com) is a new economic development & workforce digital platform. On this platform, both businesses and job seekers (including young workers) can locate incentives, programs, and opportunities. The platform includes a Workforce Training Dashboard, Job Connect Job Board (that includes a "youth friendly" job designation), Partner Connections, and a Career Pathway Directory for all school districts in Ramsey County. This platform serves as a one-stop shop for businesses and employers who are committed to hiring youth and adults.

WDA 16 – WASHINGTON COUNTY WORKFORCE CENTER

SERVICE AREA: Washington County

MISSION STATEMENT: *“Empowering youth to be successful in work and life.”*

EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT ACTION TEAM

CHAIR:

Susan Evans – South Washington County School District

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

The Education Engagement Action Team is one of four distinct action teams of the Workforce Development Board (WDB) and is comprised of a chair (who must be a Board member), several members of the WDB, staff from schools and youth-serving agencies within our local area, as well as Washington County CareerForce staff. Its purpose is “connecting youth to education and training through secondary and post-secondary opportunities and other socio-economic supports that aid in the transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency.” General activities of the action team include:

- recommending youth service providers and monitoring activities
- coordinating with secondary education on strategies to reach out to out-of-school youth
- working to embed career pathway strategies into secondary education
- including equity element in all project plans

- **Career Skills Day:** CareerForce youth staff join area schools to conduct Career Skills Day, designed for youth with disabilities. Students from local high schools and transition programs receive assistance with completing job applications, problem solving and mock interviewing. Local employers provide mock interviews and feedback to help youth in their job search. Youth are also given the opportunity to learn about community resources that may be available to them now and after graduation.
- **Career Conversations:** Washington County CareerForce staff partnered with the County library’s teen librarian to host a series of career conversations for teens during the 2022 - 2023 school year. Events were themed by occupation or industry with a panel of people working in the field providing background and Q & A. The final event was a job fair for teens, also held at the library and indoor city park. Another series is planned for the coming school year.
- **Work Readiness Training:** An interactive workshop entitled “Workplace Success” prepares youth for what to expect in a workplace and provides them with the tools to be successful. Appropriate workplace behavior and employer expectations are discussed including language, appearance, attendance, cell phone use, professional relationships, attendance and time management. A panel of business representatives also provides tips and answer youth questions about how to find and keep a job.
- **Opportunity for youth to earn academic credit:** Youth participating in Tree Trust’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) have the opportunity to earn elective academic credit through a partnership with Northeast Metro Alternative Learning Center (ALC). Youth working during the eight-week program are eligible to earn one credit for every 60 hours of work (up to two credits). They complete narrative and spreadsheet lessons to further enrich their understanding of their project and its impact on the community, their personal finances, and the impact this job can have on their future employment. Youth must complete the required number of hours and must receive satisfactory evaluations from their supervisor to earn the credit(s).

- **Community Partnerships:** Family Means is a community-based non-profit program that provides after-school and summer programming for children and teens in two low-income communities. WIOA and MYP funds provide wages for community youth to work as program assistants. The collaboration allows older youth to serve as mentors and role models for younger program participants and to learn leadership skills. Many younger youth have been overheard saying that they want to be a program assistant when they get older.

One of the projects is a community supported garden (CSA) located within one of the communities. Youth workers assisted with planning, weeding and harvesting of produce. Community members paid a minimal fee to receive healthy food in a convenient manner. Youth are exposed to new foods and recipes. Over the years and due to the success of the project, the community has given more land for the garden space and has allowed the produce harvested to be sold nearby. They also operate a produce stand that is open every Friday, at which youth learn customer service and money handling skills.



WDA 17 – CAREER SOLUTIONS (FORMERLY STEARNS-BENTON EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COUNCIL)

SERVICE AREA: Benton and Stearns Counties

MISSION: “The mission of the Youth Council is to lead and bring together community resources to focus on youth becoming capable and satisfied workers.”

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **Federally-Funded Youth Programs (WIOA)** are designed to give youth individualized attention in planning their career, navigating their education plans, and preparing to find a job. Career assessments, career plans, training scholarships, supportive services, and work experience related to their career pathway (when possible) are some of the services available. If necessary, community referrals are provided. Services are provided year-round.
- **CareerONE**, an intensive summer offering that provides at risk youth ages 14 – 17 work readiness skills, training in a safe, nurturing and learning rich environment. The purpose of the summer program is to give at-risk youth a realistic and positive work readiness training experience and to keep youth from regressing academically during the summer months. Summer components include teamwork, contextual academic enrichment, career exploration, work readiness skills, workplace safety, financial literacy, reflections and journaling, and work projects for community-based organizations and agencies.
- **Youthbuild** - Career Solutions has combined our Youthbuild program with our CareerONE program. Youthbuild provides an opportunity for economically disadvantaged, potential high school dropouts to receive hands-on training in Construction/ Manufacturing and Health Care careers. They have worked towards OSHA 10/30, and First Aide/ CPR and received credits from SCTCC and SCSU. CareerTWO has been added to Youthbuild for those interested in furthering their careers in Construction and Health Care. We will continue to work with Habitat for Humanity Carpenters Union, Local 930, and CentraCare Health.
- **Outreach to Schools (OTS)** activities are provided to complement the work of existing school counselors and provide youth and families with career exploration and career counseling, college information and current labor market information. Career Solutions Youth Career Planners strive to recruit and place interns in area high schools to assist in providing career exploration, career fairs, job search assistance, college information and current labor market information to youth and families. Interns share information about other Career Solutions youth programs to include the WIOA youth program, and CareerONE. Outreach to Schools is supported by funding from the Initiative Foundation. This additional funding allows Career Solutions to provide the interns with a learning stipend. These efforts are assisting schools in attaining college and career readiness under the World’s Best Workforce requirements.
- **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Career Quest)** - along with local schools in Stearns and Benton counties and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) collaborate and develop strategies to recruit and serve students with disabilities, as defined on their IEP or 504 plan. Strategies include collaborating with the counselors and Special Education departments for referral to the program. Career Planners assist with Career Exploration utilizing tools such as the Minnesota Career Inventory System (MCIS) and discuss post-secondary options including how to navigate financial aid and apply for college. Career Planners meet with students both in person and via Zoom. We also include these students in CareerONE and in a special project with SCSU.
- **Youth at Work (YAW)** – Career Solutions recruits students from both Stearns and Benton counties. We coordinate services when needed with area high schools to offer school credit and career/post-

secondary guidance. The students are placed at work experience sites with employers in Stearns and Benton Counties, they receive a competitive wage all while receiving a realistic on-the-job experience. Through YAW, Youth Career Planners partner with District Navigators to ensure students receive needed support to accomplish both employment and educational success.

- **TANF** – Career Solutions collaborates with students from both Stearns and Benton counties. We coordinate services with area high schools and our local MFIP provider AVIVO. The students are placed at work experience sites with employers in Stearns and Benton Counties, to receive a competitive wage all while receiving a realistic on-the-job experience.
- **WESA** – Women’s Economic Security Act the focus is to prepare young women (16-18) from diverse backgrounds for long-term success in Non-traditional and STEM career fields. We have been in collaboration with the local Area Learning Center.
- **Partner for Student Success (PFSS)** is a community initiative begun by St. Cloud Area School District 742. Its mission is to unite schools and the greater community to collectively impact and improve educational achievement, post-secondary/ career readiness, and civic engagement of our children. This partnership originated from concerns about huge challenges facing children in the greater St. Cloud area including increasing poverty, immigration status, and increasing expectations for success. Career Solutions participates in this community initiative.

Key partners include Career Solutions, United Way of Central Minnesota, Initiative Foundation, Central Minnesota Community Foundation, Readiness Pipeline, Center for Service Learning & Social Change, University of MN Extension, Milestones, St. Cloud Area School District, and the Greater St. Cloud Area Development Corporation. This team meets regularly to share services, new developments, identify cooperative ventures and added resources, and measure impact through common goals. This is one of eight current community priorities identified in our Central Minnesota area that is getting significant traction. Career Solutions has representation on three committees:

- ▶ **The Partner Champion Council** provides community input and feedback to and from the Board of Directors and staff on the strategy and direction of PFSS initiatives and action plans

implemented to achieve its mission. It serves as an advisory team advocating for Partner for Student Success and focused on continuous improvement of its work.

- ▶ **Black Youth Network’s (BYN)** - mission is to provide connections, information, resources, and opportunities for all organizations, individuals, and families supporting Black youth.
- ▶ **Exploring Potential Interests and Careers (EPIC)** – the goal is to create high-quality career exploration tools and programs that effectively bridge education and industry for Central Minnesota high school students, contributing to the fulfillment of the economic and workforce needs of the region. Career Solutions refers and staffs this event.
- **Yes Network** – The Yes Network is dedicated to creating vibrant, loving, prosperous engagement with youth and families in the neighborhoods in which they live. The Yes Network provides a summer food program, neighborhood enrichment activities, arts, and leadership training. Yes Network provides meals for Career Solutions CareerONE program and is used as a community worksite for Y@W participants.
- **The Ultimate Success Organization (USO)** – Islamic Center- The mission of the USO is to promote and empower future youth leaders, equip them with leadership skills, offer economic opportunities, provide career development and youth counseling to become productive community leaders and a global citizen. The center provides homework assistance, and team building activities for youth. In addition, they collaborate with Career Solutions to provide work experience opportunities to youth who are eligible for YAW, TANF, MYP and WIOA programs.
- **Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization (CMCEO)** – The mission of the CMCEO is to support and empower Central Minnesota Refugee and Immigrant Communities through service and advocacy. Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Center provides Education Training, Housing Support, Career Advancement, Economic Empowerment, Youth Development & Business Development. Our integrated services are a bedrock of economic wellness, health, and social empowerment that impacts our community.
- **Central MN ABE Consortium** – partnership between 31 school districts, including St. Cloud Area School District 742 and Sauk Rapids-Rice Public School District 47. Adult learners in these communities are served at numerous learning sites during daytime

and evening class hours throughout the year. Central Minnesota ABE welcomes all adults, 17 or over, who are not currently enrolled in a regular school program. The mission of ABE in Minnesota is to provide adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve the literacy skills needed to become self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members, and citizens. Career Solutions works together with ABE for aging out and OSY students.

Albany Public School District / Bertha-Hewitt Public School District / Braham Public School District / Browerville Public School District / Cambridge-Isanti Public School District / Eden Valley-Watkins School District / Holdingford Public School District / Isle Public School District / Kimball Public School District / Little Falls Public School District / Long Prairie-Grey Eagle School District / Menahga Public School District / Milaca Public School District / Mora Public School District / Ogilvie Public School District / Onamia Public School District / Pierz Public School District / Pillager Public School District / Princeton Public School District / Rocori Public School District / Royalton Public School District / Sartell-St. Stephen School District / Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools / St. Cloud Public School District / Sebeka Public School District / Staples-Motley School District / Swanville Public School District / Upsala Public School District / Verndale Public School District / Wadena Public School District.

Best Practice: Discovery Day, Career Solutions was recognized by the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) with a Promising Practices award for their Discovery Days provided to job seekers. Career Solutions has partnered with the St. Cloud Technical & Community College and local businesses to develop four 3-hour, bi-monthly Discovery Day workshops. Discovery days include Health Care, Transportation/CDL, Welding and Construction. Job Seekers can “try a career” for the day and get all their questions answered about their career of interest. Discovery Day workshops are comprised of two parts which include local labor market information from employers and hands-on career activities with program instructors. They have an employer panel so the job seekers can get all their questions answered from those who work in these positions as well as hands-on activities. During these Discovery Day workshops, job seekers can learn about, job openings, great wages, company benefits and advice from these local employee/employers. Discovery days are available to current clients and the public.

Best Practice: Career Trek and Career Trek for Teens. This is a 3-day, 9-hour (the hours were reduced due to the pandemic) program designed to help participants identify strengths and skills, explore careers, and begin setting goals for their employment future.

Best Practice CareerONE/TWO is a 5-week career readiness camp performed in person in a youth service team model. The team is assigned work projects for community organizations, in addition to job-seeking and keeping skills, working on Math, and Reading skills, soft skills, and industry-specific skills and completes them all under the supervision of the team leader. CareerTWO is a three-week camp where eligible students from CareerONE can continue their career exploration and work experience in construction, healthcare, and public safety.

OFFICE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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