

## Adult Career Pathways Competitive Grants Quarterly Provider Meeting

Date: 4/21/2025

*Icebreaker: Happy Spring! What is something you are most excited about as the grass turns green and flowers are blooming?*

### Welcome

#### ❖ DEED Staff Introductions

- Ann Meyers; Director of Adult Career Pathways [ann.meyers@state.mn.us](mailto:ann.meyers@state.mn.us)
- Jenilee Drilling; ACP Lead Program Coordinator [jenilee.drilling@state.mn.us](mailto:jenilee.drilling@state.mn.us)
- Darcy Hokkanen; ACP Grant Coordinator [darcy.hokkanen@state.mn.us](mailto:darcy.hokkanen@state.mn.us)
- Mee Xiong; ACP Grant Coordinator [mee.xiong1@state.mn.us](mailto:mee.xiong1@state.mn.us)
- Ama Akakpo; Director of Employment & Training Division [ama.akakpo@state.mn.us](mailto:ama.akakpo@state.mn.us)

### Meeting follow-up:

- ❖ Meeting notes will be available on the ACP webpage

### Program Updates:

#### ❖ Contract Extensions

- Coordinators are working hard on the extensions of SFY2025 funds. As a reminder, SFY2024 funds will expire 6/30/2025 and cannot be extended past that date.
  - Take some time before June 30th to think about how you will spend out your first half of funding allocation and plan.
  - Be mindful of your Admin cost category so that it does not exceed 10% of the total award or 10% of the expended amount, whichever is less.
  - Focus the time extension on training completion, job placement, and retention.
  - Reach out to your Coordinator with any questions.

#### ❖ Quarterly Reports; next report due April 30th for Jan-Mar quarter

- Submitting a progress report each quarter is a requirement of your contract with DEED. Per State of Minnesota's Office of Grants Management policy 08-09 "Grant payments shall not be

made on grants with past due progress reports unless the state agency has given the grantee a written extension.”

❖ Performance/Outcomes

- Be sure you are keeping up with your WF1 data entry!
- Past performance and contract outcome progress will be taken into consideration as we move into the new legislative session (EX: participants enrolled, participants completing training, exits to employment, etc.).

❖ Discussion:

- What challenges are you noticing with enrollments into your program(s)?
  - Our enrollments for MFRP are lower than usual. Client need for support is very high once enrolled. Getting to Work -Vehicle repair enrollments are higher than what we have capacity for.
  - I would say that there isn't necessarily an enrollment issue, but maybe keeping participants engaged in training and completing.
  - Enrollment and completing training is not the challenge. We are seeing lower numbers of placement.
  - We are not having enrollment issues but do notice as we have more participants from outstate our income at exit does lower as a total.
  - Some of our participants are disclosing other barriers to employment such as disability and needing more supports
- What are some services and/or resources you find most helpful when placing participants into employment?
  - Workforce Development Days built into the program. Which are required days for the program participants. Discussion of different topics, employer panel, etc.
  - At the end of cohort training, we have offered speed interviewing with employers that are currently hiring for the skills/certificate participants just trained on.
  - Hosting graduations ceremony/job fairs. They are usually on the last day of class. We include financial literacy workshop as apart of this day. They also get awarded a certificate for graduating the program. We offer headshots as well.
- What specific challenges are you noticing when connecting your participants with employers and exiting the program to employment?
  - Employer changed their entry level job description.
  - Transportation is the biggest barrier.
- For those who have strong employer partners, what are the benefits you see as an organization for your participants?
  - Easy access to referral we make to the employers. It takes time to build up the employer connections, once you have those connections its helpful. We have strong union connections, which is also helpful.
  - Beside participation in our workforce development days, it's been great to have contacts at the hospitals to set up job shadows and tours.
  - With strong employer partnerships we see multiple ways to engage students in networking beyond hiring. Tours, mock interviews, program feedback, shadow opportunities. When they hire students, having those relationships help with successful retention.

- Would it be helpful to you and your participants to connect with DEED Employer Engagement Specialists? If so, they are available to assist ACP Providers  
[Employer.Engagement.DEED@state.mn.us](mailto:Employer.Engagement.DEED@state.mn.us)
- <https://www.careerforcemn.com/find-your-employer-engagement-specialist>

## Reflections and Learnings

- ❖ How have you remained flexible in a constantly changing environment while still making meaningful progress toward participant goals and your planned outcomes?
  - We were using a cohort model, so they added ways for folks to come into the program at different stages based on their availability so they can work on different components at different times as they wait for the cohort to start.
- ❖ We want to continue improving our processes and guidance as we move into the new State Fiscal Year. Please share what is going well.
  - What ideas do you have for improvement?
  - DEED reimbursement process hits the organization hard and hard to pay providers timely. If DEED could come up with a faster process.
  - Co-sign on the reimbursement lag. As a larger nonprofit, I am able to fill the gaps with other funding at times, but even some of my other larger nonprofit colleagues are not able to do that. Any insight on why such a lag?
    - There has been a 4-6 week time frame to get reimbursed as of Jan 2025. The accounts payable team have hired a new staff.
  - What specific components of your program have been most helpful to meeting goals?
    - Support services has added value.
    - We have seen the one-on-one meetings helpful and having open writing sessions for participants to stop in to get help.
    - Being able to meet with Grant Coordinator.
  - If you offer paid work experience to participants, what are the benefits of those experiences? What are the challenges?
    - Paid work experience through ITP grant. Having the funds to pay for unpaid internships is very helpful. Also helps with the engagement with the Navigator.
    - We currently have a great Paid Work Experience set up with a local government partner. It's an amazing opportunity for our IT Career Lab (tech training) graduates. The government agency we're working with has Wednesday networking days when the participants get to "mix and mingle" with experienced IT professionals. Invaluable, unreplicable opportunities for our program graduates.
    - To meet our goals we developed a video we have posted on Facebook - and shared across different communities-

## Questions & Answers from the meeting:

1. The budget must be split 50/50 into each year but the line items (cost categories) don't need to be exactly the same in year 1 and year 2, but please let your grant coordinator know if you're wanting a line item to be for example, more funds in year one than in year two. We are splitting the amounts unless otherwise stated.

2. Will pending apps count as enrollment – or does it count once everything is entered/signed? It would not count as an enrollment.

## **Resources:**

### **Adult Career Pathways webpage**

<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/adult-career-pathways/>

**Next meeting: July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025**

Please send agenda items or information you want to share to the group. [Ann.Meyers@state.mn.us](mailto:Ann.Meyers@state.mn.us)

***Thank you!***