MJSP Funded Projects

October 28, 2024

# Partnership Grants

Grantee: Century College Award Amount: $73,000

Grantee Contact: Eric Riedel, 651-779-3310

Contributing Business(es): Absolute Quality Manufacturing

Project Summary: Absolute Quality Manufacturing, located in Minneapolis, is a distributor of electronic parts and equipment, batteries, cable and test measurement instruments. The company has identified a need to improve its workforce’s computer literacy and sales competencies, promote workplace inclusion, and ensure rigorous adherence to industry standards as vital for maintaining competitiveness, supporting business expansion, and increasing market share. Absolute Quality Manufacturing has partnered with Century College to develop a customized training program for their workforce which will include computer skills training to employees in Purchasing, Production, Engineering, and Sales, diversity, equity, and inclusion training to all employees, navigating sales in a post-COVID environment to Sales personnel, and cable and wire harness assembly standards and Continuous Quality Improvement to Production and Engineering teams. The trainings will enable Absolute Quality Manufacturing to strengthen their overall workforce by reducing downtime, improving customer satisfaction, and increasing production.

Grantee: Hennepin Technical College Award Amount: $282,609

Grantee Contact: Leslie Price, 612-432-0663

Contributing Business(es): Beacon EmbeddedWorks

Project Summary: Beacon EmbeddedWorks, located in Eden Prairie, provides in-house design, manufacturing, and support of cutting-edge System-on-Modules (SoMs) and embedded electronics (CSMT-Surface Mount Technology) that accelerate customers’ time to market. Beacon customized products require a high level of precision and specialized skills. The company has struggled to find qualified workers who possess these skill sets, and their current training program is inadequate for their needs. Additionally, the company plans to move manufacturing jobs from other locations to Minnesota that will drive the need for more skilled solderers, SMT operators, and test technicians. Lastly, the company’s diverse workforce, with 35% of employees speaking a first language other than English, creates a need for occupational language training to ensure an inclusive environment with advancement opportunities for all employees. Beacon EmbeddedWorks is partnering with Hennepin Technical College to develop a training program to address challenges around the industry’s projected growth and a tight labor market, along with Beacon’s growth in Minnesota and its diverse and multi-lingual workforce. Hennepin Technical College will develop and deliver training for 70 new and existing employees in the areas of ISO13485 Internal Auditors, 6 Sigma Black Belt & ASQ Certification, Circuit Board Building & Repair, Soldering, Occupational English, Line-to-Leadership Supervisor Training, Occupational Health & Safety, and Excel. Trainees will receive several ASQ, IPC, and OSHA certifications.

Grantee: North Hennepin Community College Award Amount: $256,198

Grantee Contact: Jiksa Tafara, 763-424-0787

Contributing Business(es): Walman Optical

Project Summary: Walman Optical is a leading provider of eyeglasses and eyeglass lenses to independent eye doctors, with 32 eyewear/lens manufacturing locations throughout the U.S., including their largest processing facility in Brooklyn Park. As a result of industry growth, the company plans to increase production at their Brooklyn Park facility and invest in advanced eyecare technologies and products. The anticipated growth and investment in new technologies and products will require additional staff and training to improve processes and increase the technological skills of their workforce. Furthermore, the company would like to develop the foundation for a succession plan to help advance their employees’ careers into management and leadership positions thereby improving employee retention. Walman Optical is partnering with North Hennepin Community College to provide training for all 234 new and existing employees in the areas of Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace; Lean Manufacturing, and Optical Knowledge. Through the Lean Manufacturing training, trainees will earn Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt Certification. Additional training will be provided for current and potential supervisors that will include courses in Effective Supervision, Leadership Skills, Mentoring, Coaching, and Sponsoring, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Introduction to Generational Leadership, Motivating Others, and Introduction to Operations Management.

Grantee: Riverland Community College Award Amount: $110,411

Grantee Contact: Peggy Young, 507-433-0602

Contributing Business(es): Design Ready Controls

Project Summary: Design Ready Controls (DRC), with locations in Brooklyn Park and Albert Lea, builds electrical control panels used in many applications and industries. In recent years, the company has expanded into the building and maintenance of electric vehicle charging components, resulting in considerable company growth. Due to labor shortages, the company finds that many of their new hires do not have the advanced manufacturing skills needed to advance internally. Furthermore, the company is currently developing a new microgrid prototype that will eventually be produced at both Minnesota locations. To make this new line successful, they will need to upskill their current employees, recruit and train new employees, and continue the training with a formal program recognized throughout the organization. DRC is partnering with Riverland Community College to develop an ongoing, formal training program consisting of four training modules: Manufacturing Principles, Advanced Assembler, Electrical Tester, and Quality Inspector. Each module will provide 48-58 hours of training and will include both hands-on training and asynchronous online learning hosted on Riverland’s LME system. Employees will earn internal certifications and OSHA-10 certification with completion of the modules. In addition to the Riverland trainings, DRC will develop supporting training modules to be delivered through their company’s learning management system. DRC intends to continue to partner with Riverland beyond the grant period to update the training and offer the programs throughout the enterprise.

# Short Form Grants

Grantee: Anoka-Ramsey Community College Award Amount: $49,964

Grantee Contact: Matthew Salo, 763-422-6116

Contributing Business(es): Air Quality Engineering

Project Summary: Air Quality Engineering, located in Brooklyn Park, produces a wide range of electronic air cleaners and air filtration systems, designed for low maintenance, energy efficiency, and optimal collection efficiency. As a small manufacturing business, AQE does not have a formalized training process for new or existing employees and relies on on-the-job training methods. With the increasing technological sophistication of air filtration systems required by its customers, AQE recognizes the need for a formalized training program to enhance the breadth, depth, and technological expertise of its employees. To address this need, AQE will partner with Anoka-Ramsey Community College to provide training to all 43 employees that will improve the technical skills of new and existing employees, establish a base level understanding of widely accepted practices in modern manufacturing, and help leadership meet the unique requirements of leading in a small business environment. All employees will receive training in Introduction to Lean and Manufacturing for Quality. In addition, production workers will receive training in Quality Measurement & Tools and Introduction to Blueprint Reading. Finally, a select group of employees will have an opportunity to participate in the Small Enterprise Leadership training, positioning them for entry-level leadership roles. Overall, training is expected to have a measurable impact on manufacturing operations and product quality.

Grantee: Anoka-Ramsey Community College Award Amount: $49,950

Grantee Contact: Matthew Salo, 763-422-6116

Contributing Business(es): Clow Stamping Company

Project Summary: Clow Stamping Company (CSC), located in Merrifield, is a full-service metal stamping and manufacturer of metal components, using traditional metal fabricating methods enhanced by advanced technology. To solidify the company as an employer of choice in the region, they have identified a need to increase the use of higher technology, adopt more sophisticated production methods, develop a more professionalized workforce, and improve management practices. As a first step in implementing its strategy for workplace improvement, CSC has targeted the development of its management and leadership structure as they consider this foundational to successfully addressing their other training needs. CSC is partnering with Anoka-Ramsey Community College to develop a formal training process to enhance the leadership skills of existing management and develop a new generation of leaders. Training will be provided to a total of 113 employees in topics including Introduction to Leadership, Providing a Healthy Workplace, Coaching for High Performance, Business Writing, and Productive Time Management. Through training, it is anticipated that 10-15 trainees not currently in leadership positions will become qualified for entry-level leadership roles and employees already in leadership positions will become qualified for higher supervisory or management roles.

Grantee: Anoka-Ramsey Community College Award Amount: $49,707

Grantee Contact: Matthew Salo, 763-422-6116

Contributing Business(es): LINDAR Corporation

Project Summary: LINDAR Corporation, located in Baxter, is a woman-owned plastic thermoforming company that produces plastic packaging for retail products, consumer goods used in painting, heavy gauge plastic products for agriculture and other OEM customers. In the past 5 years, LINDAR has added multiple capabilities to its product offerings including rotational molding, design and engineering consulting, and 3D printing and prototyping. This strategy has been highly successful, enabling the company to supply products to several large Fortune 500 companies and significantly increase its workforce. With this employment growth, LINDAR has recognized the need to enhance its management practices and expand its leadership structure. The company is partnering with Anoka-Ramsey Community College to develop a specialized training program for new and current leaders that will provide a foundational understanding of the business operations of a thermoforming plastics company, as well as practical leadership skills for those in leadership roles and basic leadership principles for those stepping into leadership positions. Training will be provided in five topic areas including: The Business of Thermoforming & Rotational Molding, Techniques of Communication, Leading with Confidence, Identifying Leadership Potential, and Supervising Peers. In the long term, the company acknowledges that high-quality leadership is crucial for maintaining competitiveness and fostering continued growth.

Grantee: Anoka-Ramsey Community College Award Amount: $49,757

Grantee Contact: Matthew Salo, 763-422-6116

Contributing Business(es): Stylmark, Inc.

Project Summary: Stylmark Inc., founded in 1954, is an employee-owned organization located in Fridley. The company originally incorporated wheel-based rolling door mechanisms into aluminum extrusions and expanded its product line to include tub and shower enclosures, bathroom cabinets, and wardrobe doors. Currently, Stylmark manufactures retail and commercial decor products and packages, including custom interior decoration packages, retail shelving, and LED display lighting. As the company has expanded, it has transitioned from two to three shifts to accommodate a growing workforce. However, it faces difficulties in hiring experienced leaders for essential operational positions. The challenges have been intensified by retirements within the workforce which elevated turnover rates among leadership roles. Recognizing the importance of leadership development, Stylmark has prioritized training as a vital strategy for cultivating its future leaders. To tackle these challenges, the company has partnered with Anoka-Ramsey Community College to create a comprehensive leadership and change management training program. This program will include four key areas: aligning personnel with business objectives, leading managerial teams, experiential leadership coaching, and adapting to changes in management. The project will provide work-based learning experiences for the leadership team to practice new acquired skills and equip the entire workforce with skills to adapt to new management approaches.

Grantee: Anoka-Ramsey Community College Award Amount: $49,757

Grantee Contact: Matthew Salo, 763-422-6116

Contributing Business(es): Wanner Engineering Inc.

Project Summary: Wanner Engineering (WE), a Minneapolis-based company, specializes in high-pressure, seal-less industrial pumps known for their durability, performance, and reliability in various industries. WE has experienced significant growth in sales and production staff due to a post-COVID surge in demand. Due to this, the company expanded its leadership structure, promoting both past and new leaders from its increasingly diverse pool of employees. While their tenured leaders are technically competent and operationally experienced, they have had little or no training in management and leadership skills, particularly in leading a diverse workforce. To achieve continued growth, WE needs a structured leadership training program that provides a common vision, corporate values, process discipline, sustained focus, uniform standards of accountability, and team unity. To achieve this, training will be developed and delivered by Anoka-Ramsey Community College that will provide leadership training to the leadership team and prepare the entire workforce for changes in leadership methods and direction. Courses will include Understanding the WE Business, Methods of Leadership, Experiential Leadership Coaching, and Building Cohesive Teams.

Grantee: Minnesota State University, Mankato Award Amount: $24,615

Grantee Contact: Tammy Bohlke, 507-389-2572

Contributing Business(es): Duininck Concrete

Project Summary: Duininck Concrete is the latest member of the Duininck Family of Companies, a third-generation, family-held portfolio of businesses. Duininck Concrete prides itself on being a “one stop shop” that supplies quality aggregates, ready mix, and construction supply products to commercial, residential, agricultural, and public infrastructure markets. The company is headquartered in Willmar and has 12 different locations and portable plant operations throughout Minnesota. Recently, Duininck Concrete has rapidly expanded and opted for internal promotions. While this approach values employee experience, it highlights a need for enhanced leadership skills, communication abilities, and business acumen. By investing in employee development, the company seeks to create a more fulfilling workplace and provide opportunities for professional growth. Duininck Concrete will partner with Minnesota State University, Mankato to provide training to employees in three areas: Leadership/Supervision Development, Communication, and Business Acumen. The training will ensure current and emerging leaders are prepared to help develop and grow employees as the company grows. A future goal is to provide this training program to other branches of Duininck companies.

Grantee: Normandale Community College Award Amount: $49,895

Grantee Contact: Brenda Dickinson, 952-358-8238

Contributing Business(es): Seagate Technology

Project Summary: Seagate Technology, located in Bloomington, is the world’s leading supplier of hard disk drives, a critical technology on which most of the world’s data is stored. In response to the CHIPS Act, a coalition of Minnesota semiconductor and wafer manufacturers (including Seagate), semiconductor supply chain partners, and leaders in higher education and research & development have come together to propose a plan to make the state a top-ten national hub and leader in the Midwest for semiconductor learning, development, and manufacturing. As one of the companies leading the efforts of the CHIPS Coalition, Seagate is partnering with Normandale Community College to develop training for new supervisors will provide a blueprint for meeting the credentialing and job advancement needs of the broader CHIPS Coalition. This project will provide training to 20 employees in topics including Success Strategies, Interpersonal Communication, Supervision, and Developing a Leadership Mindset.

Grantee: Rochester Community & Technical College Award Amount: $8,728

Grantee Contact: Jennifer Teske, 507-202-6114

Contributing Business(es): Minnesota Energy Resources - ServiceChoice

Project Summary: Minnesota Energy Resources delivers natural gas to 251,000 customers in 179 communities across Minnesota and offers appliance protection plans under the brand name ServiceChoice. ServiceChoice offers repair and replacement services for HVAC, water heaters, kitchen and laundry appliances. The business requires that appliance technicians have a thorough understanding of electricity to perform work effectively and safely for appliance protection plan customers. Minnesota Energy Resources will partner with Rochester Community & Technical College to develop a training plan to further educate technicians to better serve customers through better diagnosis, accurate parts replacement, first call completions and ultimately higher levels of customer service. Ten employees will receive training in Electrical Basics 101 through classroom training and practical hands-on applications. In addition, all training will incorporate adult learning techniques which will include course discussions, case study reviews, role plays and other activities to support learning. Training is being specifically designed for the needs of MN Energy Resources to be more proficient at their jobs adding more value to the technician’s experience.

Grantee: St. Cloud State University Award Amount: $49,839

Grantee Contact: Ileana Merten, St. Cloud State University, 320-308-6160

Contributing Business(es): Pinnacle Climate Technologies

Project Summary: Pinnacle Climate Technologies, located in Sauk Rapids, provides climate control solutions to commercial, industrial, agricultural, and retail customers through the production of heating, cooling, ventilation, exhaust, and indoor air quality products. The company has identified several factors leading to a need for training, including: the expansion of their product offerings; increased use of technology and automation; difficulty hiring experienced workers due to labor shortages; and a focus on increasing sales in the ventilation markets it serves due to a downturn in heater sales resulting from historically warm winter patterns. Pinnacle Climate Technologies is partnering with St. Cloud State University to develop a training program that will allow the company to align their products to market demands, improve sales strategies and optimize production. Training will be provided in the areas of Supply Chain, Leadership, Root Cause Analysis, Visual Management, CPR/AED, Customer Care, Marketing, and Preventing Harassment. The training is expected to help the company remain competitive, increase wages, and maintain employee benefits.

# Pre-Development Grants

Grantee: Northwest Technical College Award Amount: $50,000

Grantee Contact: Ketmani Kouanchao, 218-333-6611

Contributing Business(es): AirCorps Aviation

Project Summary: Northwest Technical College/Bemidji State University will partner with AirCorps Aviation and Greater Bemidji's Minnesota Innovation Initiative (MI2) to create an Industrial Trades and Manufacturing Certificate to help prepare workers for some of the On the Job Training (OJT) tasks required in aviation for FAA certification. The FAA has detailed requirements in Knowledge, Skills (OJT), and Risk Factors that must be documented before an individual can take the certification examinations. Most employees are not hired with FAA approved formal education or enough formal education, leading to many employees failing certification examinations or not preparing the required documentation to apply for certification. AirCorps Aviation has approximately 70 employees who all must have some level of FAA knowledge, but the path and resources to determine the appropriate coursework based on their work are currently not available. There are many other aviation related businesses that are faced with the same dilemma. The project aims to analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate the training program to bridge the gap between what employees know and can do when they are hired and what they must know and do to be certified with proof those requirements have been met. It is anticipated that a follow-up Partnership grant will train 70 aviation workers from partnering businesses.

# Low-Income Worker Training Grants

Grantee: American Indian OIC Award Amount: $192,956

Grantee Contact: Katie Fitzpatrick, 612-341-3358 Ext 125

Training Provider(s): Takoda Institute of Higher Education

Project Summary: The American Indian OIC (AIOIC), located in Minneapolis, is a multifaceted workforce development agency that offers education programs, vocational training, and employment services that help clients find employment leading to economic independence. Two core programs of the AIOIC are the Takoda Institute, a post-secondary career college that prepares students for jobs in in-demand occupations with career growth opportunities, and Career Services, which pairs clients with a certified career counselor to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP), provide job search assistance, and other support services. Through MJSP funding, a total of 31 individuals will be recruited for training in one of three areas: 1) Medical Office, with training in patient registration, insurance verification, Electronic Health Records, HIPAA standards, medical terminology, and Microsoft Office, to prepare students for administrative healthcare positions.; 2) Computer Support, which includes technology support functions such as computer maintenance, networking, troubleshooting, and customer service. Students will be prepared for CompTIA certifications, including A+, Network+, and IT Fundamentals; 3) Truck Driving, focusing on both light and heavy truck operations. Trainees will earn OSHA 30 credentials and obtain a Class A or B Commercial Driver's License. AIOIC’s Client Services will provide assistance with job search, interviewing, resume writing and other support to secure employment.

Grantee: EMERGE Community Development Award Amount: $163,350

Grantee Contact: Terra Mayfield, 612-236-0463

Training Provider(s): Interstate Truck Driving School

Project Summary: EMERGE Community Development, located in Minneapolis, is a workforce development agency with service centers in North Minneapolis and Cedar-Riverside and social enterprise businesses in Minneapolis and the northern suburbs. Services provided by EMERGE include work readiness and foundational job skill training and coaching, career training and certification, job placement and retention, financial coaching and education, youth services, and transitional employment at the social enterprise businesses within EMERGE Enterprises, Inc. Their programs have special expertise in supporting employment for formerly incarcerated participants, new Americans, single parents living in poverty, and participants in need of career training to obtain living wage jobs. MJSP funding will support training for 50 individuals in the areas of Forklift Operator, Boom/Scissor Lift Operator, and Commercial Driving (Class A CDL). Emerge Enterprises, Inc. will provide on-the-job training opportunities through Second Chance Recycling, Second Chance Clean Out, and Furnish Office & Home. These transitional jobs provide three to nine months of real-world work experience, including route driving, recycling, and heavy equipment operation. Participants receive wages funded through the business's earned income, and complete CDL Permit training while working. EMERGE will provide assistance with job search, interviewing, resume writing and other support to secure employment.

Grantee: Goodwill-Easter Seals MN Award Amount: $139,998

Grantee Contact: Sheila Olson, 651-379-5864

Training Provider(s): Goodwill-Easter Seals MN

Project Summary: Goodwill-Easter Seals of Minnesota (GESMN), with 20 locations throughout the state, is a leading developer and provider of employment services offering a robust platform of individualized employment and support services to help individuals overcome personal barriers and combat racial/ethnic inequities in earnings, employment opportunity, and education. GESMN is also an accredited postsecondary school licensed by the MN Office of Higher Education. GESMN’s training programs provide durable skills and employer-recognized certificates through short-term trainings that prepare participants for livable wage jobs and advancement opportunities. To meet local labor market demands for employees with business skills, GESMN will be providing the Business Professional Pathways (BPP) Training Program, a ten-week virtual program with daily class sessions and additional self-paced coursework that participants complete asynchronously outside of class sessions. Students will learn a variety of essential skills for entry-level administrative positions including professional communication, intro to project management, planning, critical thinking in problem solving, and common productivity software. Upon completion, participants will receive an industry-recognized Professional Communication certification.

Grantee: Greater Bemidji Award Amount: $170,500

Grantee Contact: Dave Hengel, 218-444-5757

Training Provider(s): The Idea Circle-MN Innovation Initiative

Project Summary: Greater Bemidji, a non-profit organization in Northwest Minnesota, provides economic development and workforce development services addressing the region's poverty and racially diverse population. The organization includes the Minnesota Innovation Initiative (Ml2), a talent development initiative that focuses on two primary goals: strengthening the workforce pipeline through recruitment, training, and retention of skilled workers, and assisting companies in competing and growing by providing access to economic and business development services. Through MJSP funding, a total of 50 individuals will receive training that supports jobs as Maintenance and Repair workers. Recruitment and assessment will be coordinated with partners that include WorkForce Centers and Community Action Programs, with priority given to BIPOC, individuals moving off public assistance, long-term unemployed, veterans and older workers. Orientation will include a manufacturing field presentation, program eligibility confirmation, and individual assessments by a M12 Navigator of each trainee’s personal goals, challenges, training ability, and commitment. Three training programs will be offered: 1) Industrial Safety focuses on OSHA-related subjects and equips participants for certification as a Certified Production Technician - Industrial Safety through MSSC; 2) Mechatronics offers a comprehensive introduction to the correct use of tools, safety protocols, AC/DC electrical systems, hydraulic power applications, and small engine operations; 3) Working with Metals educates trainees on heat treatment, metalworking techniques, basic soldering, welding characteristics, and repair methods. The M12 Navigator and Program Director will work together to place trainees before training is completed.

Grantee: Hired Award Amount: $136,043

Grantee Contact: Andrea Peterson, 612-237-0362

Training Provider(s): Century College

Project Summary: Hired, a non-profit organization located in Minneapolis, provides employment and related programs to help job seekers meet their personal and financial needs through employment. Hired also offers core services that include one-on-one employment counseling, workplace readiness, job search assistance, educational support, and support services. MJSP funding, leveraged with other funds from the City of Minneapolis and DEED Direct Appropriation, will be used to support 60 participants in six training cohorts to go through Hired’s Human Service training program. The program consists of 108 hours of training over a six-week period, including a minimum two-day job shadow. The curriculum features the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by their partner employers, including workplace scenarios that make the classroom operate as much as possible like being on-the-job. In addition, participants will complete the Mental Health First Aid Certificate, an eight-hour program that covers how to understand the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders and help people in crisis and non-crisis situations. Minneapolis residents enrolled in the program will also receive training stipends, support services, and other workforce readiness content.

Grantee: International Institute of Minnesota Award Amount: $200,000

Grantee Contact: Michael Donahue, 651-377-8653

Training Provider(s): International Institute of Minnesota

Project Summary: The International Institute of Minnesota (the Institute) is a non-profit agency in St. Paul that assists New Americans by providing programs and services critical for integration into an American community (i.e. resettlement services, food, shelter, workforce readiness, employment training, and job placement). MJSP funding will support training for 60 individuals to participate in the Institute’s Nursing Assistant Training (NAR) and provide partial tuition assistance for six individuals participating in the Institute’s Medical Careers Pathway Program. Through a thorough admissions process, students are selected for the 8-week, or 11-week Nursing Assistant Training (NAR) which combines state-mandated Nursing Assistant curriculum with English Language Learner (ELL) curriculum focusing on medical vocabulary and key medical concepts along with intensive support. Classroom and skills lab take place at the Institute; clinical training takes place at area nursing homes. Upon NAR certification, participants receive employment search and placement assistance as well as ongoing employment support. After graduates have worked as a Nursing Assistant and are determined to be college ready, they can participate in the Institute’s Medical Career Advancement (MCA) program which offers one-to-one intensive career counseling and on-going academic guidance, assessment of previous education and licensure, financial aid planning, tuition assistance, academic tutoring, college application guidance, financial literacy workshops and financial coaching, and an overall assessment of readiness for the demands of higher education.

Grantee: Minnesota Tech for Success Award Amount: $200,000

Grantee Contact: Tamara Gillard, 612-383-2390

Training Provider(s): Minnesota Tech for Success

Project Summary: Minnesota Tech for Success (MTFS), located in Minneapolis, is a nonprofit organization working to address the digital divide in the Twin Cities. Lack of access to technology and to adequate tech education and training disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color in the Twin Cities, preventing individuals from obtaining living-wage employment in the tech industry. MTFS provides digital literacy education and IT workforce development training through their MTFS Lean program. The target population they serve are low-income, primarily Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, and a small but growing number of veterans, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with histories of justice involvement. Through this project, 110 participants will receive training in one or more of the five courses offered by MTFS (Digital Literacy, IT Fundamentals +/Tech +, HTML5 & CSS Java Script, Network +, and Project +) and earn industry-recognized IT certification for each course completed. Trainees have the opportunity to attend courses at MTFS’ headquarters, virtually, or a combination of the two. MTFS also offers internship opportunities at MTFS’ tech refurbishing and recycling enterprise, support services, such as case management, job counseling, and retention services, and opportunities to earn continuing education credits at Saint Paul College, their educational institution partner. When combined with their workforce development training, these support services help low-income individuals gain the credentials and support network they need to attain and maintain employment in the tech industry.

Grantee: Minnesota Valley Action Council Award Amount: $140,800

Grantee Contact: Margy Hendrickson, 507-345-2405

Training Provider(s): South Central College

Project Summary: Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC), a non-profit Community Action Agency serving the nine counties of South-Central Minnesota, assists low-income individuals and families to transition out of poverty by accessing resources and opportunities that empower people to meet their needs and achieve economic stability through securing employment, training for employment, affordable housing, and educational opportunities for children. MVAC Career Counselors are housed in the three CareerForce locations in their service area (Mankato, Fairmont, and New Ulm). MVAC’s training focuses on Career Pathway certifications in the health care and manufacturing fields, offering stackable credentials for certification in National Incident Management System (NIMS), Nursing Assistant, Personal Care Assistant, and Welding, which can continue into degrees for License, Practical, and Vocational Nursing, Registered Nurse, Dental Assistant, Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning – Refrigeration, and Machining. Training is also offered for Class A Permit and Commercial Driver’s Licenses. Training will be provided by South Central College, with campuses in Faribault and North Mankato, and TDT, a certified provider of commercial driver training.

Grantee: National Able Network Award Amount: $200,000

Grantee Contact: Matt Weis, 312-994-4285

Training Provider(s): National Able Network

Project Summary: National Able Network, Inc. (Able) is a non-profit organization that provides individuals with employment counseling, training, and placement services which promote economic sustainability in the communities they serve. Able administers multiple large-scale federal, state, and corporate workforce development programs in Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. In 2012, Able launched the IT Career Lab program, an accelerated learning program for aspiring information technology professionals. The program offers a multi-certification path with the opportunity to earn three globally recognized certifications from Microsoft and Cisco. In response to a growing need for qualified IT professionals in the Twin Cities region, Able launched the IT Career Lab office in Golden Valley, MN. Able partners with local employers and supportive service agencies to prepare students for success and are co-located with Jewish Family and Children’s Services (JFCS). The IT Career Lab program prepares students to earn two certifications throughout the ten-week run time: The Cisco Certified Support Technician (CCST) IT Support Certification (Weeks 1-5) and The Cisco Certified Support Technician (CCST) Networking certification (Weeks 6-10). Students also have the option of continuing training for an additional five weeks to earn the Cisco Certified Support Technician (CCST) Cybersecurity certificate.