

Cover Sheet

2023 TANF Youth Innovation Project

Applicant Agency:			
<i>Please use the legal name and provide the full address. This is the fiscal agent with whom the grant agreement will be executed.</i>			
1. Agency Name:	Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.		
2. Director Name:	Vicki Leaderbrand	8. Contact Name:	Tina Jaster
3. Telephone:	218-847-0718	9. Telephone:	218-847-0720
4. Fax:	218-847-7404	10. Fax:	218-847-7404
5. Email:	vickil@rmcep.com	11. Email:	tinaj@rmcep.com
6. Agency Website:	https://rmcep.com/		
7. Address:		12. Address:	
803 Roosevelt Ave. Suite 301 P.O. Box 1108 Detroit Lakes, MN 56501-1108		803 Roosevelt Ave. Suite 301 P.O. Box 1108 Detroit Lakes, MN 56501-1108	
13. Federal Tax ID: (required)	41-0942639	14. Minnesota Tax ID: (required)	7223300
15. Unique Entity ID (UEI) Number: (required)	GNYSZLNQ8M36	16. SWIFT Vendor ID: (if known)	000019698201
Required Information:			
17. Project Name:		2023 TANF Youth Innovation Project	
18. Geographic Area Served:		19 counties in the Local Workforce Development Area 2 encompassing over 20,000 square miles of northwest and west central Minnesota	
19. Number of Participants Served:		8	
20. Project Start Date:		January 1, 2023	
21. Project End Date:		December 31, 2023	
22. Total Amount of Funding Requested:		2023 - \$20,000	

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

Authorized Signature 	Title Executive Director	Date 12/6/2022
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2023 TANF INNOVATION PROJECT

Narrative Questions:

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

Those participants that are parents and receiving MFIP will be co-enrolled in the MFIP Employment and Training Program operated by Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (RMCEP). MFIP job counselors will inform enrolled parents of the opportunity this project holds for their children ages 14-18 who are active on the MFIP grant.

MFIP Employment Service counselors will incorporate TANF Youth Innovation into each eligible individual's Employment Plan (EP) as appropriate. This individual EP will identify Employability Measures for those youth participants who are also parents on MFIP.

Both MFIP Job Counselors and Youth Service Coordinators serve MFIP youth within our eight regional offices in Little Falls, Brainerd, Bemidji, Wadena, Alexandria, Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes and Moorhead, MN. Our staff will provide collaborative services while developing the Employment Plan (EP).

The information on Work Experience earnings found in Appendix D and E of the planning instructions for these funds will be reviewed by the Job Counselor and discussed with the participant, if needed, regarding the family situation. Communication with the County MFIP financial workers will be shared as appropriate and as consented to by the participant and if a minor, their parent.

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

RMCEP is the Employment Service Provider for MFIP Employment and Training services in LWDA #2. Eligible youth will be identified through our current clients enrolled in other programs as well as referrals from our currently enrolled MFIP families. RMCEP is the Employment Services Provider for WIOA Youth and MYP programs. Finally, RMCEP has established partnerships with the counties and schools in our service area and we work with these entities to recognize eligible youth is a natural part of our operations.

Our efforts will target at least 20% from communities of color (2 out of 8). This number is derived from a review of our exiting MFIP and WIOA Youth participants' demographics as of 12/07/2021. Currently, our MFIP Counselors are serving communities with relatively large Arabic, Kurdish and Somalian populations as well as Afro Americans.

Any participants who need or can benefit from English language services will be referred and connected to entities who provide those services in their local communities. RMCEP also includes information on diversity, equity and inclusion in both the worksite supervisor and participant orientation to work overviews that they must complete prior to being the work experience activity.

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

RMCEP has incorporated *Guideposts to Success* into all its youth programming. <https://www.ncwd-youth.info/guideposts>. The Guideposts provide very specific career exploration and planning

information, as well as counseling about career pathways and occupations in-demand. This information is also incorporated in the EP in beginning a career pathway to a high-growth, in-demand occupation through education and training opportunities. RMCEP may use the Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) to assist youth to develop a career portfolio.

Job Counselors can also create YouScience accounts with participants which includes an assessment (with nine modules) that not only assesses interests, like other career inventories, but also measures aptitude. The results are positive, detailed, and comprehensive and are a great resource for participants who need extra assistance with identifying their strengths and matching careers.

RMCEP hosts the Big Ideas mobile learning lab at most of our locations at least once per year. Participants in this TANF Youth Innovations program will be able to access this offering when it becomes available. The Big Ideas lab is a fully immersive virtual and augmented reality experience that introduces a variety of trades. It includes 3 classrooms with simulators for welding, carpentry, and excavation. They also use TANSFRVR, an Oculus based career exploration program that provides over 20 trades simulations. The focus is on in-demand jobs with an interactive experience.

Financial Literacy is addressed through training offered through the “Your Money Your Goals” curriculum. Participants can access paper booklet copies and download the publications. With COVID-19 in play during this grant, the use of virtual means to deliver this training is key. Job Counselors can better work with their participants to help them develop good financial skills and knowledge.

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

Job Counselors will ensure meaningful work experiences through assessment and structured discussions with participants on career goals and aspirations. Participants will be guided through a listing of established current worksites in the area. Job Counselors will discuss job details with each participant based on the stated participants’ goals. If a job site is not already established, the Job Counselor will work to develop a site that best meets the needs of the participant. After the sites are selected, participants will be instructed on the application procedure. Job Counselors will be cognizant of sites that provide culturally responsive programming and respect specific procedures that each site may have. With COVID-19 closures to many businesses and worksites to in person work, Job Counselors are also discussing with potential worksites the ability to work from home options and job duties. For some participants and worksites, this can be done with electronic monitoring by supervisors.

RMCEP continues to develop worksites that provide quality mentorship as well as valuable work skills to participants.

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

Job Counselors will discuss any barriers to workplace success with participants and include steps to solve or alleviate those barriers in their Employment Plan. Referrals and/or support services will be provided as part of the solution.

A World of Work orientation session is completed with each participant that covers required and necessary information for success on the worksite. This included workplace expectations and responsibilities, safety, participant rights and pay procedures.

Through assessment tools such as MCIS and YouScience, information related to career planning to include labor market and occupational information will be provided. Job search techniques on applications, resumes and interviewing will also be offered. Financial literacy and other on-line trainings are offered as appropriate and availability.

Regular check-ins by the Job Counselor with both the worksite supervisor and the participant will include discussions of progress as well as any concerns or improvements to be made.

Any and all of these are able to be done in person or virtually with the participants. The preference is in person, when possible, to develop trust and a mentoring relationship but, due to COVID-19 situations, virtual or phone conversations are available to use.

Each year, our Agency centers host 1 – 2 Job Fairs at their locations. Recently, we began to focus on employers who hire youth and make it a practice to highlight those employers to the youth that attend the Job Fairs. Participants in this program will be strongly encouraged to attend and provided information ahead of time on how they can make their experience at the job fair successful.

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

RMCEP, Inc. will not be using stipends as part of our project design.

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

RMCEP has found success in offering incentives to participants for a variety of the activities that they participate in. These incentives provide encouragement and accomplishment of educational and training goals that help young people to attain the skills needed to be successful in the workforce and allow them to obtain higher wages based on those skills. We are offering the following incentive below to participants who engage in the work experience activity connected to it. A copy of the Incentive Policy used for this TANF Youth Innovation project is attached.

RMCEP will provide an incentive payment of \$50 to those participants that complete at least 50 hours of work experience per their goal in the EP.

\$50 Upon the verification by RMCEP of 50 paid work experience hours completed in this program, the TANF Youth participant will receive this \$50 retention incentive payment. **Note:** These hours worked can be funded through the braiding of resources if needed.

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

Participants will be assessed through the work readiness indicator. Work readiness benchmarks include the ability to demonstrate positive behaviors in attendance, communication, cooperation, work quality, punctuality, teamwork, and initiative. Participants will be able to demonstrate that they can meet employers' expectations on the job through appropriate behaviors as instructed by both the supervisor and RMCEP counselor. The evaluation of Work Readiness Skills is completed by the worksite supervisor based on observations and interactions with the youth. In addition, the following elements will be tracked:

- a. participants earning academic credit or service-learning credit,
- b. participants attaining a high school diploma, equivalent, certificate or credential,
- c. entered employment, post-secondary education, occupational or vocational skills training, apprenticeship and military,
- d. returned to school (dropouts), and

e. remained in school (potential dropouts).

Each participant will be coached and will experience the opportunity to complete a face-to-face interview with the worksite supervisor as a training opportunity for future employment search. RMCEP Counselors will provide interview guidance to assure that the participant is prepared for the interview, including follow-up communication.

Each participant will work towards a goal of obtaining a positive work reference or letter of recommendation from the job site.

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

Young adults who are enrolled will have co-enrollment options available, dependent upon eligibility determination, for the following programs offered by RMCEP. These programs include: MYP, WIOA Youth, Youthbuild, Youth at Work, WIOA Adult, MFIP and SNAP. As other funding or program options arise, they will be considered as well. It is RMCEP's practice to determine and indicate on the intake form each individual applicant's eligibility for as many funding sources as possible at the time of intake. This helps to ensure for a smoother co-enrollment process later on, as well as transitioning to another funding source to continue to receive work experience services when the funds in this program end.

During the time of any co-enrollment, the counselor can indicate through activity enrollment(s) in the following services: ALC, GED, Basic Skills, Credential without training, partnering, secondary school classes, transition to post-secondary education and staff assisted job placement. These services are not able to be reflected through WF1 activities available through this TANF Innovation funding source.

Our staff will co-enroll participants if it is determined appropriate based on the services needed by their participant.

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

On May 26, 2021, the RMCEP Board of Directors approved the wage rate for work experience positions of \$12.25 per hour. This included all programs with work experience activities and officially went into effect on June 7, 2021.

This wage increase was requested to boost the marketability of the work experience activity and give us the opportunity to build employability skills with participants as they are more likely to stay on a worksite that offers a comparable wage.

All participants in the TANF Youth Innovation program will be paid the \$12.25 per hour wage.

ATTACHMENT 1: WORK PLAN 2023 TANF INNOVATION PROJECT

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

Agency: Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.		Contact: Tina Jaster		
Project Goal: To provide work readiness and work experiences for 8 MFIP parents up to age 24, or youth ages 14 – 18 who are in a MFIP household currently receiving MFIP.				
Strategies (activities, steps, and tasks to achieve the goal):	Expected Outcomes	Number Served	Start Date	End Date
1) Targeted youth and teen parents will be identified.	Eight (8) eligible MFIP teen parents and/or youth who are in MFIP households will be enrolled in this project.	8	Jan. 1, 2023	Dec. 31, 2023
2) An individualized Employment Plan will be developed with each participant to include barrier identification and solutions.	The Employment Plan will provide each participant with steps and supports to reduce or remove barriers to success in acquiring work readiness skills and on job performance.	8	Jan. 1, 2023	Dec. 31, 2023
3) Enrolled participants will attend the Orientation to Work component of the World of Work curriculum.	Participants will gain an understanding of the 15 targeted areas in this curriculum designed to help prepare them for work and the work environment.	8	Jan. 1, 2023	Dec. 31, 2023
4) Counselors will match prospective employers with participants for the work experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The participant will have a job with a private, for -profit, non-profit or public sector employer and successfully complete the employment timeframe. b. The participant will gain work experience, earn a paycheck and attend the experience and knowledge of job-related expected work ethics. 	8	Jan. 1, 2023	Dec. 31, 2023

Agency: Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.		Contact: Tina Jaster		
Project Goal: To provide work readiness and work experiences for 8 MFIP parents up to age 24, or youth ages 14 – 18 who are in a MFIP household currently receiving MFIP.				
Strategies (activities, steps, and tasks to achieve the goal):	Expected Outcomes	Number Served	Start Date	End Date
5) RMCEP staff will encourage participants to complete activities related to incentives to earn the incentive pay allowed as appropriate to their goals.	Enrolled participants will work towards the work experience goals in their EP's that is eligible for an incentive award.	8	Jan. 1, 2023	Dec. 31, 2023
6) RMCEP Staff will follow-up with the worksite supervisor regarding the development of the work readiness skills.	Enrolled participants will attain the work readiness skills as defined in Attachment B of this grant.	8	Jan. 1, 2023	Dec. 31, 2023
7) RMCEP will track the following data elements in addition to work readiness skills and goals: 1) participants earning academic credit or service-learning credit, 2) participants attaining a high school diploma, equivalent, certificate or credential, 3) entered employment, post-secondary education, occupational or vocational skills training, apprenticeship and military, 4) returned to	Cumulative data provided at the end of grant period. Progress data on any interim reports.	8	Jan. 1, 2023	Dec. 31, 2023

Agency: Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.		Contact: Tina Jaster		
Project Goal: To provide work readiness and work experiences for 8 MFIP parents up to age 24, or youth ages 14 – 18 who are in a MFIP household currently receiving MFIP.				
Strategies (activities, steps, and tasks to achieve the goal):	Expected Outcomes	Number Served	Start Date	End Date
school (dropouts), and 5) remained in school (potential dropouts).				

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

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

Agency	Contact Person Phone/ E-mail
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.	Bill MacFarlane 218-847-1213 billm@rmcep.com

Budget Category	TANF Innovation Funds
833 - Administration (5% maximum)	\$1,000.00
881 - Youth Wages and Fringe Benefits	\$12,616.00
885 - Direct Services to Youth	\$5,232.00
891 - Support Services	\$1,152.00
TOTAL	\$20,000.00

Budget Category	Provide a detailed breakdown of the items and amounts budgeted:
833 – Administration (5% maximum)	Administrative costs for budgeting, monitoring, auditing and performance of reporting requirements. Costs include staffing and overhead costs of the Executive Director, Comptroller, Human Resources and Administrative Support Staff
881 – Youth Wages and Fringe Benefits	(Please provide details on how funds will be allocated i.e. stipends, wages, etc.) Work Training – 6 weeks @ 20 hours/week = 120 hours 120 hours x \$12.25/hour = \$1470 \$1,470 + FICA \$80 + WComp \$27 = \$1,577 per youth \$1,577/youth x 8 youth = \$12,616.
885 – Direct Services to Youth	(Please provide details on how funds will be allocated i.e. direct staffing costs, training funds, tuition, etc.) Staffing and data processing costs of client services is estimated at 18.167 hours staff time per youth enrollment @ \$36/hour = \$654 x 8 youth = \$5,232

891 – Support Services	<p>(Please provide details on how you anticipate funds will be allocated i.e. transportation, clothing, tools, etc.)</p> <p>Support services to assist with transportation and clothing needs. It is estimated at \$94 per youth x 8 youth = \$752.</p> <p>It is anticipated other funding sources (MFIP or MYP) will assist with supportive service needs if applicable.</p> <p>Incentive payments of \$50 per youth x 8 youth = \$400</p>
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Incentive Policy for TANF Youth Innovation Program

Rural MN CEP, Inc.

For youth participants enrolled in the TANF Youth Innovation Program

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

IMPLEMENTATION

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 - Incentives are awarded upon the completion of activities that are tied to educational and/or credential/certificate employment or career goals in the participants Employment Plan (EP). The RMCEP Counselor will recommend if the participants receive the incentives based on their participation and outcomes achieved.
 - The incentive payments below shall be awarded equitably to eligible participants.
 - The incentive award payments will be reflected under Incentive Payments on the AS400 FSR. The support service system will be used to issue the incentive payment. A case note must be written in WF1 made for each incentive awarded and listed on the participant’s EP.
 - Incentives are not to exceed \$50 for an individual youth.
 - All incentives may be limited by program funding availability.
 - The incentive policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Employment Retention Goal attained:

\$50 Upon the verification by RMCEP of 50 paid work experience hours completed in this program, the TANF Youth participant will receive this \$50 retention incentive payment.

Note: These hours worked can be funded through the braiding of resources if needed.