

# WIA YOUTH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**PURPOSE:** The WIA Youth Program provides economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth with the job skills and knowledge to become productive workers in Minnesota's future labor force.

**FUNDING:** \$9.8 million in Federal funds in PY2013. Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220; U.S. Code, Title 29, Chapter 30) provides statutory authority.

**PARTICIPANTS:** 3,583 economically disadvantaged youth were employed in 2013.

For youth 14-18 years of age:

- 95% attained work readiness, occupational and/or basic skills
- 88% attained a high school diploma or equivalent
- 92% placed in post-secondary, advanced training, military, employment or apprenticeship training

For youth 19-21 years of age:

- 83% entered employment
- 91% were retained in unsubsidized employment
- 58% attained an educational or occupational credential
- \$5,786 six-month wage change

## TEN ELEMENTS OF WIA PROGRAMS:

- Tutoring, study skills, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
- Alternative secondary school offerings;
- Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
- Occupational skill training;
- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsible and positive behaviors;
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation;
- Follow-up services;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

## RECENT WIA YOUTH SUCCESS STORIES:

**Nyeshia** wanted to be a nurse but found it challenging to focus on career goals while caring for her year-old son, dealing with family and mental health issues, and a difficult relationship with her son's father. With the help of East Side Neighborhood Services WIA staff, she became a certified Personal and Home Care Aide (PCA) with First Aid and CPR certification and spent 3 months in a paid internship at the Friendship Center. Assisting seniors with programming and social/therapeutic activities, Nyeshia learned the importance of professionalism, dress code, and working well with many different personalities. "Working at Friendship Center helped prepare me for a career in healthcare. I enjoy working with the elderly. They are good people."



**Dean** was officially hired in April 2013 by the Murray County Recycling Center in Slayton, MN. Two years prior, he was on the verge of dropping out of school, faced with early parenthood, and other struggles that led him into the juvenile justice system. Through Southwest MN Private Industry Council (PIC), he was placed in a job at the Recycling Center. He also received guidance, work-readiness skills, and support to obtain his diploma at Murray County Central High School and is no longer involved in the juvenile justice system. "PIC staff helped me feel more confident and gain the skills to get a job."



**Rosalie** overcame difficult barriers to enter the aviation industry along with her uncle, a pilot, and grandfather, a retired air mechanic and pilot. The only female student in the Aviation Maintenance Technology Program (AMT) at Northland Community and Technical College, she wasn't taken seriously by classmates. The WIA Youth program supported her through counseling, a scholarship, tools, and payment of testing and license fees. Rosalie graduated from AMT in May, passed her FAA exams, and is now working as an Aircraft Mechanic at the University of North Dakota.



**Katie** was in need of a part-time job due to her mother's recent lay-off and financial struggles. She was placed by Washington county staff as an After-School Program Assistant in her mobile home community mentoring children. Her supervisor says, "Katie is a wonderful worker! She is proactive in planning children's activities and engages with the kids. She often sees things that need to be done before I do!" Katie graduated from high school and is now attending St. Paul College through a Power of You scholarship and is working part-time at the college's child care center.



**Youth Councils** 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 Councils:

- Assure that the youth service strategy fits into the overall vision and strategic direction for workforce development established by the LWIB.
- Assure that youth from all backgrounds can access a variety of services.
- Promote effective learning environments linking education and employment, leadership development, nurturing mentors and sustained support for at-risk youth.
- Reconnect out-of-school youth to an educational program where they earn a high school diploma and transition to a post-secondary training.
- Leverage resources to effectively serve youth.
- Identify eligible service providers of youth activities under WIA.
- Provide oversight of WIA Youth Service Providers.

For more information on Youth Councils, see Youth Council Resource Guide at:  
<http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/resources/index.jsp>

**For More Information:**

Kay Tracy, Office of Youth Development  
MN Department of Employment and  
Economic Development  
332 Minnesota Street, St. Paul 55101  
[Kay.Tracy@state.mn.us](mailto:Kay.Tracy@state.mn.us)  
651.259.7555

**To Find a WIA Youth Service Provider:**

<http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wia-youth.jsp>

**RECENT WIA YOUTH SUCCESS STORIES:**

**Conner** came to the Winona WorkForce Center as a senior who had missed several school days due to anxiety. Through WIA, he was placed at the county's Extension Office to assist with the county fair and robotics activities at the Summer Youth Hot Jobs Camp. He never missed a day, came late, or failed to complete his work. Upon graduation (with a 3.5 GPA), he was hired as a Shipping and Receiving Clerk at Fastenal and enrolled at St. Mary's University. His supervisor says, "He is such a delightful young man and always worked hard while he was here. I know he's going to be successful some day because he just has that mentality." It's Conner's dream to go to Law School.

**Rural Minnesota CEP participants** are placed at Rabideau Conservation Academy and Learning Center in Blackduck. The U.S. Forest Service Camp Rabideau's Learning Gardens is a National Historic Landmark and a designated nursery for endangered plant species. Through WIA, youth conduct tours, provide building, trail, and grounds maintenance, remove invasive species, collect and replant ash seeds, transplant endangered plant species, and harvest produce from the solar-heated building. The building, constructed by the youth, includes a high "tunnel" greenhouse. Youth also installed a solar charging system and built the solar heaters, which were made from donated, recycled materials. During their camp experience, youth also developed resumes, work readiness skills, career portfolios exploring conservation careers, and created a Business Plan for the camps' Learning Gardens.

**Tatiana** got involved in HIRED's Youth-LEAD as a senior at Central High School in St. Paul, developing a long-lasting mentoring relationship with Counselor Donald Walker which had a positive impact on her success at Wartburg College in Iowa. With her mentor's encouragement, she enrolled in Admission Possible, a college access program and focused on continuing her education. "I wasn't focused on college at first but having a mentor helped me believe, 'I can actually do this.'" Tatiana graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology and community sociology and was hired as a Welfare-to-Work program counselor last summer.

**Jasmine** became homeless early in life due to serious family struggles. With the assistance of YES! Duluth and Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) staff, she found subsidized housing, attained a diploma, and summer work experience. After high school, YES! Duluth helped Jasmine obtain a Nursing Assistant certificate at Lake Superior College and find a job in home health care. She recently found a job in Minneapolis where she will be closer to her family and help out her mother.

