



# Youth Committee Resource Guide



## Cooperative Youth Services and Best Practices

May 16, 2016



This is a compilation of best practices providing a snapshot of cooperative youth service strategies underway in Minnesota's 16 Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs).

**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:**

- Assure that the youth services strategy fits into the overall vision and strategic direction for workforce development established by the LWIB.
- Provide oversight of WIOA Youth service providers and assure that youth programs include the elements of a Job-Driven system: employer engagement, connected education and training strategies, public-private partnerships, work-based learning, labor market/career information.
- 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 WIOA.

The **Youth Committee Membership** shall include the following as described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):

- Chaired by a member of the LWIB 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;
- Representatives of youth service agencies, including juvenile justice and local law enforcement agencies;
- Representatives of local public housing authorities;
- Parents of WIOA-eligible youth;
- Individuals, including former participants, and representatives of organizations that have experience in relating to youth activities; and
- Representatives of the Job Corps, as appropriate.

The Youth Committee may also include other individuals as determined to be appropriate by the Chair of the LWIB in consultation with the Chief Elected Official.

**For more information, see the WSA contact information on each profile or:**

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**Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Young Adult Program Web Page:**  
<http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp>

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**BEST PRACTICES MATRIX**

<b>Minnesota Workforce Service Area Best Practice</b>	<b>Youth Leadership/ Engagement</b>	<b>Employment Skills/Work Experience</b>	<b>Family/Parental Involvement</b>	<b>Business Outreach and Engagement</b>	<b>Partnerships/ Leveraged Resources</b>
<i>Northwest Private Industry Council</i>					
- Computers for Our Community	X	X	X	X	X
- Northern Valley Career Expo	X			X	X
- Outreach to Schools	X				X
<i>Rural Minnesota CEP</i>					
- Career Advisor/Outreach Program	X		X	X	
- Serving Youth with Disabilities (PETS)	X	X	X	X	X
- Transitional Internship Experience	X	X		X	X
- Youth Focus Groups	X				
- Youth Committee Strategy	X	X	X		X
- Integrated Service Delivery	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training</i>					
- Northeast Career EdVenture		X		X	X
- CEOs in the Classroom				X	X
- WorkForce Center (WFC) in the School		X			X
- Just4U		X			X
- Itasca County Juvenile Program	X	X			X
<i>Duluth Workforce Development</i>					
- Out of School Youth Strategies	X	X			X
- Outreach Strategies	X				
- Financial Literacy				X	X
- Career Exploration		X			
- Private Sector Involvement		X		X	
- CEOs in the Classroom				X	X
<i>Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services</i>					
- Youth Leadership Development	X	X		X	X
- Private Sector/Workforce Protégé Project		X		X	X
- Academic Success					X
- College Test-Drive		X	X	X	X
- Request for Proposals	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council</i>					
- ACCESS-College Connector		X	X		X
- Job Skills Fair		X	X		X

*Cooperative Youth Services and Best Practices*

<b>Minnesota Workforce Service Area Best Practice</b>	<b>Youth Leadership/Engagement</b>	<b>Employment Skills/Work Experience</b>	<b>Family/Parental Involvement</b>	<b>Business Outreach and Engagement</b>	<b>Partnerships/Leveraged Resources</b>
- Youth-Led Focus Group	X				
- SW MN Workforce Council Career Expo				X	X
- SW MN Careers Facebook Page		X		X	
- Breaking Traditions	X	X			X
- "LifeSkills, Inc." Event	X	X		X	X
<i>South Central Workforce Council</i>					
- Outreach to Schools/Partners in Career Exploration	X	X	X	X	X
- Youth Intervention Program	X	X		X	X
- MFIP Innovations Teen Parent Project	X	X	X	X	X
- Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It. Program	X	X	X	X	X
- Disability Employment Initiative	X	X	X	X	X
- Resource Mapping/Youth Directories	X		X	X	X
- Facebook	X				
- Work Skills Competition	X	X		X	X
- Career Fairs	X	X		X	X
- Financial Fitness Training	X	X		X	X
- Exposure to Demand Occupations	X	X	X	X	X
- Tour of Manufacturing Event	X	X	X	X	X
- Hot Jobs: Healthcare Needs You Event	X	X	X	X	X
- Scrubs Camp	X	X		X	X
- Non-traditional Careers for Women	X	X	X	X	X
- Framework for Workforce Development	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Southeastern MN – Workforce Development, Inc.</i>					
- SE MN Workforce Development Board				X	X
- SE MN Best Places to Work Award				X	X
- Youth Advisory Council	X			X	X
- Scrubs Camp	X	X	X	X	X
- Services for Youth with Disabilities	X	X	X	X	X
- Academy Model of Pre-Employment Training		X		X	X
- Career Pathways for Youth	X	X		X	X
- Targeted Jobs List		X		X	
- Bridges to Healthcare		X		X	X
- Emerging Leaders Grant	X	X	X	X	X
- Hire Up Program	X	X		X	X
- United Way Partnership		X		X	X
- High School Credit	X	X	X		

*Cooperative Youth Services and Best Practices*

- Youth Intervention Program	X	X			X
- Career/Transition Fairs		X		X	X
- Operation Starfish		X		X	X
<i>Hennepin Carver Workforce Service Area (Hennepin County)</i>					
- Team Tech	X	X		X	X
- High School Credit	X	X		X	X
- Award Ceremony			X	X	X

***Cooperative Youth Services and Best Practices***

<b>Minnesota Workforce Service Area Best Practice</b>	<b>Youth Leadership/Engagement</b>	<b>Employment Skills/Work Experience</b>	<b>Family/Parental Involvement</b>	<b>Business Outreach and Engagement</b>	<b>Partnerships/Leveraged Resources</b>
- Young Adult Conservation Corps	X	X		X	X
- Local County Commissioner Funding	X	X		X	X
- Tree Trust	X	X	X	X	X
<b><i>Hennepin Carver Workforce Service Area (Carver County)</i></b>					
- SW Metro Educational Cooperative Youthbuild Program		X		X	X
- Ridgeview Medical Center for Healthcare Careers		X		X	X
- Three Rivers Park District		X		X	X
- District #287		X		X	X
<b><i>Minneapolis Employment and Training Program</i></b>					
- STEP-UP	X	X		X	X
- Minneapolis Partners for Youth Conference					X
- Minneapolis Teen Job Fair				X	X
- Year Round Federal Youth @ MPS	X	X		X	X
- Specialized Training	X	X		X	X
- Year Round Federal Youth Credential and Paid Internship Project	X	X		X	X
- Focus on Financial Literacy			X	X	X
<b><i>Anoka County Job Training Center</i></b>					
- Future Leaders Program	X	X			X
- Starting Block	X	X			X
<b><i>Dakota-Scott Workforce Services</i></b>					
- The Zone	X				
- Reality for Youth	X	X			
- Recognizing Youth Achievement	X		X		X
- Recognizing Youth Champions				X	X
- Community Activities		X			X
- Getting Credit		X			X
- Financial Literacy Training	X	X			X
- Camps		X			
- Foster Care Youth		X			X
- Opening Doors		X		X	X
<b><i>Ramsey County Workforce Solutions</i></b>					
- Outreach to Schools	X	X	X	X	X
- Job Corps Coordination	X				X
- Customer Service Training	X	X	X	X	X

<b>Minnesota Workforce Service Area Best Practice</b>	<b>Youth Leadership/Engagement</b>	<b>Employment Skills/Work Experience</b>	<b>Family/Parental Involvement</b>	<b>Business Outreach and Engagement</b>	<b>Partnerships/Leveraged Resources</b>
- Invest in You	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Washington County WorkForce Center</i>					
- Career Assessment and Exploration	X		X		
- Work Readiness Training	X	X	X	X	X
- Academic Credit	X	X			X
- Community Partnerships	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council</i>					
- CareerONE	X	X	X	X	X
- Youthbuild	X	X	X	X	X
- Outreach to Schools	X	X	X	X	X
- Higher Education Career Advising Pilot (HECAP)	X				X
- Discovery Academy	X	X	X	X	X
- Project Lead the Way	X	X	X	X	X
- Students Technology and Robots (S.T.A.R) Camp	X	X	X		X
- Career and Technical Education Programs	X	X	X	X	X
- Partners for Student Success			X	X	X
- Cradle to Career			X	X	X
- Youth Zone	X				
- Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation Talent Corps Portal	X			X	X
<i>Winona County Workforce Council</i>					
- Careers Camp	X			X	X
- Educational Science Camps	X		X	X	X
- National Career Readiness Credential		X	X	X	
- Youth Zone Website	X				
- Enhanced Summer Orientation		X			
- Online Safety Orientation and Assessment	X	X			
- Know Your Rights		X			
- Outreach to Schools		X			X
- E-mentoring Program	X			X	X
- Youth Participant Survey	X	X			



## **WSA 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 COUNCIL CHAIR:**

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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **The Computers for Our Community Program**, which is currently operating in three Northwest Minnesota communities, provides a unique service based work experience opportunity for youth participating in employment and training programs provided through Inter-County Community Council and the Northwest Private Industry Council. This program, which provides low-income families with a free computer and reduced cost internet access for a year, is staffed entirely by youth program participants working under the supervision of an adult worksite supervisor. Participating youth are responsible for screening and cleaning computer that is donated to make sure that all of the equipment is working. Youth are also actively involved in distributing computers to families that are eligible to receive them. To date over 128 computers have been distributed to income eligible families living in and around the communities of Thief River Falls, Crookston and Warroad, Minnesota. Youth working through this project demonstrate and educate eligible families on how to set up their computer, as well as answer any basic questions that they may have about setting up, turning on, or operating their computer.
- **The Northern Valley Career Expo** is 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.

- **Outreach to Schools/Regional Career Information:** Inter-County Community Council is currently partnering with 10 school districts within the region for the Outreach to School Program; 100 students will receive career exploration resources and current labor market information through group presentations and one-on-one career exploration sessions. The MnCareers Regional Supplement for Northwest Minnesota continues to be a valuable tool in providing current labor market information to students and parents in Northwest Minnesota. Outreach-to-Schools (OTS) activities are coordinated with school administrators and counselors, teachers and Tech. Prep. Coordinators.

## **WSA 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.”*

### **YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

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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 delivered career advising services to several Minnesota school districts over the past five years. The ultimate goal of this service is to provide a means for high school students to develop an individual career plan through higher level of student interaction and based on the latest career information. RMCEP has recently expanded Career Advising to a broader consortium of high schools through private funding from the Otto Bremer Foundation and local school districts in Crow Wing County. RMCEP is also in its fifth year providing career advising services to high schools in Beltrami County.

Additionally, Minnesota Legislature authorized and funded the Higher Education and Career Advising Pilot to provide Career Advising services through four pilot projects in Minnesota. RMCEP was selected to operate one of these pilots in the Moorhead area. Our project is specifically designed to provide career advising services, to include career awareness, career planning, and regional occupations in demand to high schools in Clay County to assist youth to form and develop post-secondary plans and make informed career choices.

RMCEP's curriculum for Career Planning provides information on selecting post-secondary education or employment, financial aid for education, and career paths as well as individualized assessment and occupational information. Our career counselors meet with students to help them explore careers, assess their interest and aptitudes, research occupations, industries, organizations, and become familiar with job seeking strategies.

RMCEP expects to reach over 4,000 high school students in West Central Minnesota through these services in the upcoming year.

- **Serving Youth with Disabilities:** In partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, RMCEP is operating a pilot project to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (**PETS**) to youth who are eligible for VRS. The focus of the project is to introduce career pathways to VRS-eligible youth and provide them with a work experience. Youth must be referred by a VRS counselor, be attending secondary school and be age 14-21.

RMCEP Youth Counselors will work with the VRS Counselor and the youth to identify barriers and design plans to address any barriers. These plans are included in the Employment Plan. VRS will provide appropriate assistance and accommodations as necessary. Youth Counselors monitor sites regularly to provide support to the youth and the employer and to provide early intervention in the event of any issues arising.

**Objectives:** Youth will gain valuable work experience and gain work readiness skills:

1. Punctuality and attendance
2. Following instructions
3. Personal hygiene and grooming
4. Interpersonal relations such as courtesy, communication, and teamwork
5. Positive work attitudes such as responsibility
6. Completing tasks effectively

These skills are evaluated by the employer on a regular basis and the employer, Youth Counselor, VRS Counselor will use this evaluation to provide feedback to the youth to demonstrate the youth's progress in attaining these skills. RMCEP serves as the employer of record and works with the employers to ensure the work experience is mutually beneficial, and provides the youth with the opportunity to learn work skills. To ensure strong wrap-around services, we co-enroll the youth with MYP. We plan to serve 12 youth in this pilot in the upcoming year.

- **Transitional Internship Experience:** Through the Youth Competitive Grant, RMCEP has developed a project focused on providing a summer or year-round internship experience for economically disadvantaged or at-risk youth, ages 14 through 24. RMCEP will introduce youth to career pathways, increase exposure to in-demand jobs important to the local economy, promote skill acquisition in academics, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and work readiness competencies.

RMCEP will develop a 160-hour internship that links transition-aged youth to employers who face difficulties filling vacancies within their company. MN DEED Regional Business Service Representatives (BSR) have agreed to assist with outreach to local businesses that may benefit from this program. Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Youth Coordinators work with interested businesses to develop the worksites and provide job counseling to interns.

This internship program is designed to be both intensive and competitive. Prospective

candidates will not only have to meet eligibility requirements but also participate in a selection process. Candidates will apply for internship openings and the best eligible candidate will be selected for each position. Youth Coordinators will use the World of Work curricula and Career Ready 101 with each youth to certify work readiness skills prior to internship placement.

Youth will be placed on internship worksites and will be evaluated by the employer for increased proficiency of these skills as well as skills specific to the internship job description developed in partnership with the Youth Coordinator and the employer. Interns must successfully achieve at least a bronze on the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) to successfully complete the internship program.

- **Youth Focus Groups:** Each summer the youth coordinators in each WorkForce Center in our 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. Questions are currently being used that relate to the National Collaborative on Workforce Disability (NCWD) **Guideposts for success** transition planning tool found at:<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/guideposts>.
- **Youth Committee:** The Youth Committee have identified the following strategies as key priorities of our Youth Plan and strategic vision:
  1. Develop a recruitment strategy and create an informational brochure of services for outreach to out-of-school young adults.
  2. To work closer with parents, guardians and advocates to enlist their support for the young adults who enroll in our programs.
  3. Work more collaboratively with other local agencies within our communities to better understand the resources and services they can also provide to our participants.
- **Integrated Service Delivery:** Developed out of our DEI project, RMCEP continues to use tools implemented in that project in an integrated service delivery model for youth. This includes the incorporation of the *Guideposts for Success* model into services and programs, the utilization of Integrated Resource Teams, and the use of the Road Map as a vital piece of the youth's plan.

#### The Guideposts for Success Model (brief description)

Building on thirty (30) years of research and experience, the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), created the Guideposts for Success, a comprehensive framework that identifies from a developmental perspective what all youth need to succeed during the critical transition years. There are also areas of focus to include the following populations: youth in foster care, who have involvement in the Juvenile Corrections system, those with learning disabilities, and mental health needs.

### **WSA 3 – NORTHEAST MINNESOTA OFFICE OF JOB TRAINING**

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

**MISSION:** *“To establish an easily accessible, customer-focused youth workforce development system that will meet the needs of all workers, both youth and adult, as well as employers in today’s globally competitive, technology driven market.”*

**YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **Northeast CareerEdVenture:** Individual assessments, career planning and job seeking skills are provided to potential dropouts, youth with disabilities, youth involved with the courts and corrections and youth in or aging out of foster care. The project coordinates with the various tribes and tribal community and the Native American Youth Education program. The Office of Job Training’s Outreach to Schools effort, offers 15 professional Career Counselors who provide free career guidance in 45 schools.
- **CEOs in the Classroom** connects local private sector business leaders with eighth grade classrooms using a structured model that emphasizes the importance of early career planning, including work opportunities in Northeast region of Minnesota, testimonials from the speakers about how they achieved their workplace status, and how what students do at a very early age can impact their future in the workforce. The Northeast Minnesota Youth Council is joining forces with local Chambers of Commerce to expand the ‘CEOs in the Classroom’ program throughout the region. Never before has such a far-reaching partnership between the public workforce development system and the private sector occurred within the region. More importantly is the initiative’s aim to impact the K12 system through the unprecedented outreach to students at such a young age. Therefore, this effort truly represents a partnership between three of the most important components of thoughtful workforce development – the public workforce development system, local employers, AND the public education system.
- **WFC in the School:** WSA staffs are available daily at the Grand Rapids Senior High School Career Center. Students stop in during their study hall for assistance with career exploration, resume development, information on post-secondary options, etc.

- **Just4U** which is offered throughout the school year at Falls High School on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Services offered include homework help, tutoring, and career counseling for students in grades 7 to 12. Referrals are provided from the high school counselor and from parents, besides walk-in students. The high school encourages the program; they see it as a real asset and are able to give it to parents as a resource available at their school. The program is in the high school library. **JUST** means: **J**ob Skills, **U** Plan Your Future, **S**tudy-Time and **T**utoring.
- **Itasca Co. Juvenile Program** Youth staff have developed extensive contacts with Itasca County Juvenile Probation Officers, Intensive Supervised Release juvenile agents, area foster homes, Thistledeew Correctional Camp and the Wellness Court. These agencies have been able to refer and have their youth placed into the youth work experience program. The youth are able to pay fines, pay license reinstatement fees and past due child support payments from the work experience earnings. Adjudicated youth have been able to obtain positive referrals and references from the worksite supervisors which has led to some unsubsidized employment. This work opportunity has provided a positive community engagement with the youth which tends to reduce the level of recidivism for youth.

## **WSA 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.”*

### **YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

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### **EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **Collaborative Partners:** YES! Duluth has ongoing relationships with a number of youth serving agencies including Life House, which serves at-risk homeless youth, St. Louis County Social Services, the Arrowhead Juvenile Center, Woodland Hills Treatment Center, and the Duluth School District’s Bridge Program, which helps disabled youth attain their high school diploma. Participants are referred from these agencies and YES! Duluth works in coordination with agency staff to develop individualized plans and services. YES! Duluth staff visits with foster care social workers to gain referrals and often receive referrals directly from foster parents as well. YES! Duluth counselors coordinate with local MFIP job counselors to serve customers in common. Also, YES! Duluth coordinates with the Duluth School District’s Achievement Centers – centers within the schools that serve youth who are not performing up to their potential- to hold work readiness classes and get them ready for summer employment.

In addition, various outside agencies give presentations or tours during work readiness classes that YES participants attend before being assigned to a work experience site. Some of these presenters include Lake Superior College, US Bank, Minnesota Power, Western Lake Superior Sanitary District, the University of Minnesota Extension, and the 148th Fighter Wing – Minnesota Air National Guard.

- **Out-of-School Youth Outreach:** Duluth Workforce Development’s YES! Duluth program maintains a strong referral network that effectively connects Out of School Youth with the program. This network includes local youth-serving organizations such as Life House, Lutheran Social Services’ Oh-No 18 Program, Valley Youth Center, Neighborhood Youth Services and the YWCA Young Mother’s Program. Additionally, referrals are made by Probation Officers, the Arrowhead Juvenile Center, Northeast Regional Corrections Center (NERCC), the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, St. Louis County Social Workers, Foster Parents, and MFIP Job Counselors.

While referrals from agency partners are an effective way to engage youth in the YES! Duluth program, they may not always follow-through. For this reason, it is also important to connect with youth where they are most comfortable. To accomplish this, YES! Duluth is expanding its connectivity to agencies at different locations in the community to meet youth where they are – which is oftentimes outside of the Workforce Center. For example, YES! Duluth staff are now available during ABE orientation sessions at the Area Learning Center (ALC) and work closely with Life House education staff to support youth working on their GED. Staff is also working to build stronger connections to the Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge Duluth Campus, Woodland Hills, Program to Aid Victims of Sexual Assault (PAVSA), Churches United in Ministry (CHUM) and others to improve connectivity to our community's most vulnerable youth.

- **Youth of color and other under-served, under-represented youth populations:** YES! Duluth works with the Center for American Indian Resources, AICHO (American Indian Community Housing Organization), Gimaajii and All Nations, all of which refer Native American youth to the program. Additionally, YES! Duluth works closely with the ISD 709 Office of Education Equity to facilitate connectivity to the program. YES! Duluth also applied for and has been awarded a full-time VISTA starting in August 2016. His/her primary focus will focus on outreach to disparate communities.
- **Private Sector Involvement:** Private sector employers provide a variety of work experience opportunities for YES! Duluth program participants. Because many of these are first-time work experiences, sites are specifically chosen and tailored for the individual based on his/her interests and abilities. A number of these work experiences have led to permanent positions with these employers.

Mentoring and on-the-job-training are integral to a successful work experience for both program participant and employer. As part of the employer orientation, YES! Duluth encourages employers to provide constructive feedback, ensure adequate training and lay out clear expectations as a way to help youth be successful. Not only does this help the employee develop, it leads to a more effective employee for the employer.

With assistance from members of the Local Workforce Development Board, Chamber of Commerce and Youth Committee, business development continues to be a significant part of our work. We are working to add formalized internships to the menu of opportunities available to both in and out of school youth and our work with the schools provides an opportunity to develop a clear “pathway” from in-school education and instruction, to hands on work experience and continued learning, to levels of increased responsibility and ultimately, an opportunity to gain experience in an environment that is aligned with the student's career interest.

- **Career Exploration:** YES! Duluth uses websites such as ISEEK.org and onetonline.org to help facilitate career exploration activities. On those websites, youth can complete interest and skill inventories, get a list of careers to explore that match those interests or skills, and find descriptions and labor market information for those careers. Worksite and college tours are often set up as part of a work readiness training week to help participants explore local employers, careers, and training options.

YES! Duluth continues to be involved with Construct Tomorrow, an annual event that provides hands-on exploration of careers in the construction trades. Students can “try out” activities at various stations and access information about apprenticeship training and careers.

- **Incentive Payments:** As a reward and incentive for accomplishing goals, participants receive money or gift cards. Money can be earned by achieving a GED, high school diploma, or an advanced certificate or degree, achieving a job upon exit, completing job search classes at the workforce center, and staying in work or college during program follow-up. Gift cards can be earned by achieving goals or making significant progress toward goals. All incentive items with what can be earned are listed in a formal policy reviewed and approved by the local WIOA Youth Committee.
- **Financial Literacy:** YES! Duluth has partnered with banking representatives from US Bank and National Bank of Commerce to develop a customized financial literacy curriculum for youth participants and taught by the bankers. Currently, YES! Duluth staff are in the process of being trained in financial literacy presentation for youth. Topics include opening a bank account, credit card interest, savings interest, budgeting, and financial goal setting.

## **WSA 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 COUNCIL CHAIRS:**

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### **LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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### **EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES:**

- **Youth Services:** Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS) prepares young and emerging adults who have encountered barriers to success for sustainable and satisfying employment through the provision of education opportunities, paid work experience, and individualized guidance and case management. These experiences lead to improved self-confidence, increased job skills, and positive work habits.
- **Career and College Exploration:** Youth are guided by a trained employment specialist and complete assessments to discover areas of career interest and aptitude. They also receive the labor market and financial aid information that is necessary to make informed career decisions.
- **Work Experience:** Youth receive the positive reinforcement and satisfaction that comes with earning a paycheck while developing skills, learning positive work habits, and providing extra hands for local employers. In some cases, youth can receive academic credit from their school for successful completion of this experiential learning opportunity.
- **Work Readiness Skills:** Youth receive individualized case management and, in some cases, mentorship from worksite supervisors. These activities are focused on helping participants learn the value of effective communication, teamwork, dependability, and positive attitude at work.

**BEST PRACTICES:**

- **Private Sector Project/Workforce Protégé Program:** This enhanced work experience opportunity gives youth the opportunity to benefit from a deeper employer commitment. Because the employer agrees to reimburse CMJTS for a portion of the participant's wage (generally 50 percent) youth participants benefit from a longer opportunity. This gives them the chance to develop more skills while on the job. Another critical component of the Workforce Protégé strategy is the provision of one-to-one mentoring sessions. These sessions occur at least weekly between each Workforce Protégé participant and the business owner or other supervisor-level personnel. This mentoring time is meant to help the young participant benefit from the experience of the mentor and give them additional insight into the mentor's career pathway. It also provides an opportunity for the mentor to help the participant develop strategies to overcome their personal barriers to success. CMJTS has collaborated with employers to provide 37 Workforce Protégé opportunities since the program's inception.
- **Career Jumpstart:** Adapted from similar programs in the Chicago area, CMJTS' Career Jumpstarts have given young people the opportunity to explore careers and receive credentials that are supported by the labor market. Specific industries have been targeted for each Jumpstart offering and have, to date, focused on both manufacturing and healthcare. In addition to learning the importance of positive work habits, participants of the manufacturing-focused Jumpstart took part in several experiential learning labs which included hands-on learning in welding and other modern manufacturing processes. These participants also had the opportunity to earn OSHA 10 and forklift certifications. While participants of the healthcare-focused Jumpstart also received assistance with the development of positive work habits, otherwise known as career success skills, the remainder of their classroom time was spent receiving patient care-related instruction and earning nursing assistant certification. After the conclusion of a Jumpstart training, participants who didn't immediately enter competitive employment were given the opportunity to participate in a paid work opportunity, supported by state or federal employment and training programs, to help them further develop their résumés and learn additional work skills.
- **Request for Proposals:** Each year CMJTS invites schools and other agencies to submit proposals to provide additional experiential learning and credentialed training opportunities for out-of-school youth who face barriers to employment. In 2015, the Steger Wilderness Center collaborated with Anoka-Ramsey Community College for such a proposal, which provided youth the opportunity to spend four weeks at the Steger Wilderness Center in Ely, Minnesota. While in this wilderness environment, participants received hands-on instruction from master stone-masons who taught them how to quarry stone and use it to construct walls and other permanent structures. Participants were also certified in forklift operation and received continuing education credits from the college. Upon completion of the project, two participants received offers of employment from their master stone-mason trainers. CMJTS looks forward to this continued partnership with the Steger Wilderness Center and Anoka-Ramsey Community College in 2016.

## **WSA 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:** *“It is the mission of the Youth Council to guide the coordination of services that fully develop the employment potential of youth in Southwest Minnesota.”*

### **YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

Tom Hoff, Chair  
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### **LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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### **EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

**Advocating for College and Career Education Success in Southwest Minnesota (ACCESS):** ***ACCESS (Advocating for College and Career Education Success) for Youth and Young Adults in Southwest Minnesota.*** Our goal is to provide services which will impact and improve the way one views their future opportunities. We would like to see more people in the SW Region get some kind of training beyond high school to break the cycle of poverty. We are operating under the definition of college as follows; any post high school training opportunity resulting in an earned credential, from a certificate to a bachelor’s degree and beyond. These services are available to youth, young adults, parents, and school districts in the region which address unmet needs: a strategy for delivering effective education planning, career counseling and labor market information to the region’s youth and families. The vision for the PIC Youth Programs is to work in partnership with school districts to ensure all youth have access to employment and training services they need to be self-sufficient and successful. The SW MN PIC staff work with students in area school districts to assist them with education and career planning, including; college planning, assistance with applications, financial aid and scheduling campus visits, job searches and assistance with applications, resume writing skills, industry tours, career fairs, career and college readiness days, Career Pathway training, etc.

The **Young Adult Career Pathway Program** offers comprehensive trainings to eligible participants who traditionally face barriers to successful employment. The fundamental career and technical skills training concentrates on high demand high pay industries in southwest Minnesota; according to DEEDs Occupations In Demand (OID) Tool, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Retail, Transportation, Construction, and Mechanical industries are just a few of the those industries listed as “well above average” demand and growth in southwest Minnesota.

To assure increased participant completion and skill mastery, career pathway training, work experience, and support services are provided through the project partnership. Additional instruction will enhance participants' Basic English and Math comprehension. Intended outcomes include: higher skills attainment and successful completion of industry-recognized credentials, college credits, job placement, job retention, enrollment in higher education career pathway/degree programs, enhanced awareness of resources and opportunities for career advancement.

The **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Innovation Project** funded through collaborative efforts between MN Department of Human Services and MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to increase the employment opportunities for teen parents, ages 16-24, who are receiving MFIP benefits; and younger youth, ages 14-18, who are on the grant in MFIP households, while assisting them in addressing any problems that impair the ability to make successful transitions from school to work, apprenticeship, the military, or post-secondary education training and improve their long term employability skills. Building on successful on-going business driven, short-term training initiatives to offer comprehensive, integrated training, job readiness and job placement services and support services to target populations in southwest Minnesota.

The **2016 Pre- Employment Transition Services (PETS) Pilot Project** provide services in the form of work experiences, introduction to career pathways and related support services to VR-eligible youth, to demonstrate effective intra-agency collaborations and local partnerships which improve the outcomes of youth who are eligible for VR services. Local VRS staff in coordination with the PIC Youth Coordinator(s) will incorporate pre-employment transition services, which may include: job exploration counseling; work experiences in an integrated environment in the community (including internships in public and private sector); and workplace readiness training for each participant.

Many youth need to develop career success skills before they are ready to succeed in unsubsidized employment. Often, they also lack the experience necessary to secure desirable jobs. PIC youth staff will address these barriers in collaboration with participants' VRS counselors by continuing to provide experiential and work-based learning opportunities for appropriate youth via paid internships/work experience opportunities. This will give these participants the opportunity to gain the skills and experience necessary to find success in the workplace, as well as create an employer and community connection.

PIC Youth Programs provides youth with *work-based learning* opportunities through placement in entry level paid work experiences that provide them with an opportunity to learn basic skills and competencies for success in employment.

**Career Expo:** Since 2002, a number of education and workforce agencies and regional businesses have cooperated to provide regional Career Exploration Days for high school students. Today the event has evolved into a highly interactive Career Expo. Hundreds of business, agency and education volunteers work together to provide this opportunity for high school students, adult basic education students and various SW MN Workforce Center participants. Nearly 2,000 individuals participate annually. Each year the number and type of interactive exhibits has expanded to better meet the needs of schools and students from the region. The Southwest Minnesota Workforce Council Career Expo will be hosted at two sites: Minnesota West Community and Technical College - Worthington Campus and Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall.

The 2015 *Southwest Minnesota Workforce Council Career Expo* was held on September 29th and 30th at the college campuses of Southwest Minnesota State University–Marshall and Minnesota West-Worthington. 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. During the two expo events we served 1,831 students from 36 schools, which involved the cooperation from over 290 volunteers from the following partners. 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>

**Southwest Minnesota Careers Facebook Page:** The Southwest Minnesota Careers Facebook page is an online resource for information on hot jobs, education, and wages in Southwest Minnesota. This page is an extension of the Southwest Minnesota Careers website ([www.swmncareers.org](http://www.swmncareers.org)), which was designed to help everyone easily research labor market information to make better career decisions, while also helping businesses find employees by increasing the pipeline of qualified applicants. The website focuses specifically on Southwest Minnesota, encouraging employment options in the region.

Through Southwest Minnesota Careers, the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Council is committed to building tomorrow's workforce through training, leadership, and economic development by providing employment and training services to residents and businesses across the region.

**Breaking Traditions:** Breaking Traditions is an annual event sponsored by Minnesota West Community and Technical College and the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council. The event is designed to encourage high school students to consider a variety of career paths. Breaking Traditions is in its 20th year as of 2014, and each year expands to give participants more opportunities to explore careers through hands-on exploration as well as tours of program areas offered at Minnesota West campuses. Each campus offers unique programs and features different activities. High schools are encouraged to choose a campus to tour that reflects the interests of the majority of students. Staff expects nearly 75-100 students from the local Alternative Learning Centers to visit the campuses of Minnesota West Community & Technical College - Jackson, Pipestone, Granite Falls, Worthington, Canby & the Luverne Center. While on campus the students learn about the college admission process and financial aid and are able to do hands on activities in a majority of the programs offered at Minnesota West Campuses, from Healthcare to Auto Mechanics, Cosmetology to Power Sports, and Fluid Power and Computers to Early Childhood Education.

**“LifeSkills, Inc.” Event:** Invitations are sent out weeks in advance to the alternative learning programs and centers in the 14-county service area. Participants are asked to complete an application with interview questions. They are also encouraged to dress for success at the event. As participants enter the conference center on the Southwest Minnesota State University campus, they are greeted by PIC staff, and signed in as the “employees” who are then directed to use their time cards to punch in for the day. Participants actively engage in three “department meetings”, and build teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, budgeting and financing skills. During the event, attendees are evaluated on basic attributes necessary to be a good employee (teamwork, leadership, following directions, attitude, dress, taking appropriate break times, timeliness transitioning between sessions, etc.). Certificates and prizes demonstrating and relating to the skill in which they showed great effort are given to those who ranked highest. Full evaluations with positive feedback are given to the teachers for their students. From the initial application, interview questions, and actions while “on the job” that day, every participant walks away with tools to assist them in becoming part of a great future workforce.

## **WSA 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 COUNCIL CHAIRS:**

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### **LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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### **EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICE STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **Outreach to Schools/Partners in Career Exploration:** recruits first year graduate students in the Student Counseling Program at Minnesota State University-Mankato to provide career exploration and career counseling assistance to high school students in local school districts.
- **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.
- **MFIP Innovations Teen Parent Project:** provides teen parents on the MFIP program in the nine county area a single point of contact that will act as a mentor to assist teens in navigating and accessing community resources.
- **Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It. Program:** targets services to youth from communities of color. 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 in communities of color, 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 communities of color that have overcome adversity to demonstrate that it is possible to achieve their dreams. In addition, the YWCA Mankato provides leadership opportunities, such as SURGE!, which is a leadership program for young girls grades 9-12 or the Annual Women’s Leadership Conference. Youth with disabilities that are not ready for competitive employment will participate in specialized programming to build their employability skills.

- **Minnesota Disability Employment Initiative:** South Central was one of three WorkForce Service Areas that were chosen to be implementation sites for the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI,) which was a three year Department of Labor Grant that was awarded to Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development to provide services to youth with disabilities. The implementation of the key strategic approaches: Guideposts for Success, Integrated Resource Teams and Partnership & Collaboration were proven to be successful and were continued after the grant period.
- **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/](http://www.workforcecouncil.org/youth-council/projects/youth-directories/)
- **Facebook:** The Mankato Area Community Interagency Committee (CTIC) and each of the nine counties served by MN Valley Action Council (MVAC) have Facebook pages to connect youth to information on jobs and events in the area. Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search “Mankato Area CTIC” and “MVAC Youth Services-(Insert County Name)”. MVAC has pages for Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan Counties.
- **Work Skills Competition:** is an event organized by the Mankato Area CTIC 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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. For more information visit [www.tourofmanufacturing.com](http://www.tourofmanufacturing.com).
- **Hot Jobs: Healthcare Needs You! Event:** Due to the shortage of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), Patient Care Assistants (PCA), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), several area organization partnered to develop a “Hot Jobs: Healthcare Needs You!” informational event and job fair for high school students and job seekers. The local partners included South Central College, Rasmussen College, Ecumen, Lakeview Methodist, Madelia Community Hospital &

Clinic, Mayo Clinic Health System, Department of Employment & Economic Development, Minnesota Valley Action Council, South Central Service Cooperative, South Central WorkForce Council, , LeSueur-Henderson Public Schools, Mankato Public Schools, Sibley East Public Schools and St. Clair Public Schools. The event included a panel of people currently in the field, students that are just entering the healthcare field, and human resource representatives. Then students rotated between 4 different hands on zones including an aging simulation, patient safety, vital signs and the job fair. There were over 250 students from the local area that attended the event and 23 employers that had booths for the job fair.

- **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.
- **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. Our local labor market analyst developed a list of occupations in the area that are considered non-traditional. The group developed a non-traditional careers page on the South Central WorkForce Council website where these resources are available along with information on local training opportunities and apprenticeship opportunities. 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.

## **WSA 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 COUNCIL CHAIR:**

Rotating

**LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:**

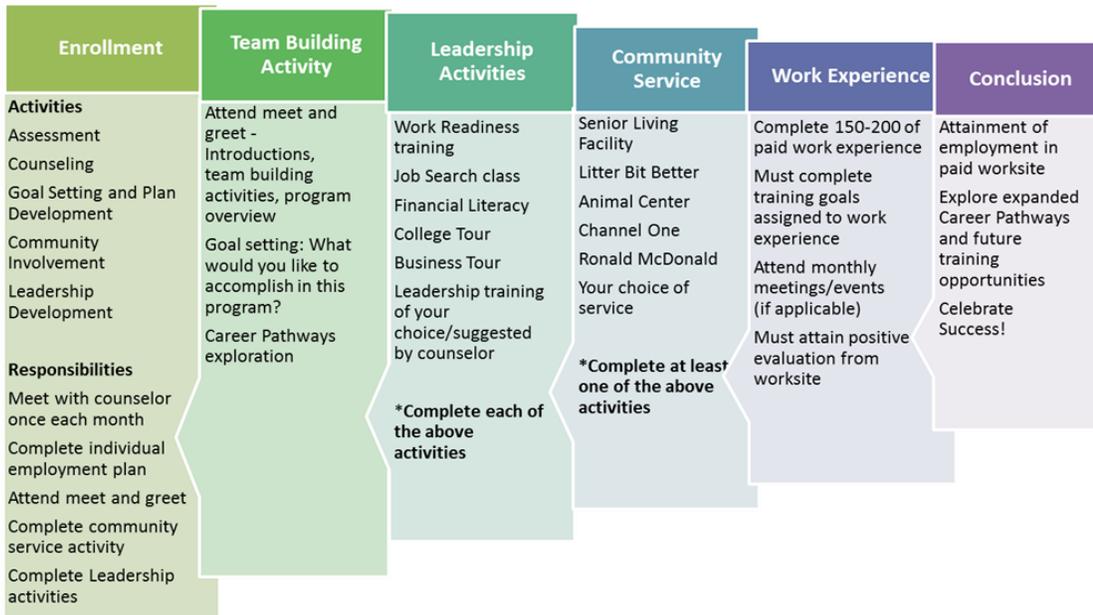
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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **The SE MN Workforce Investment Board** has an innovative committee structure based on industrial sectors and careers that are in demand. Contact the WSA for a copy of the strategic plan for the LWIB and the Emerging Workforce Taskforce Goals. For more information visit: [www.wfdi.ws](http://www.wfdi.ws)
- **Southeast Minnesota Best Places to Work Award:** Workforce Development, Inc. honors businesses each year as the Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota. “There are some great employers in our communities. This survey becomes a tool to help them recruit and retain the best employees. We want to recognize our best employers and provide valuable data to help all of our employers identify what they do well and where they have room for improvement”, said Randy Johnson, Executive Director, Workforce Development, Inc. The Best Places to Work is a national program that recognizes the best employers in local communities. Workforce Development, Inc. surveys companies within Freeborn, Mower, Rice, Steele, Goodhue, Olmsted, Houston, Dodge, Fillmore and Wabasha Counties to identify the Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota.
- **The Youth Advisory Council** encourages local private – sector employer representatives to become actively involved through a speaker’s bureau. Employer representatives are available to speak on work-related topics to youth groups and local educational entities. The goal of this project is to bring workforce relevance to educational activities.
- **Scrubs Camp:** is a career exploration activity for youth in grades 9-12. Youth are exposed to a variety of careers in the health care field during their five day stay on a college campus. For more information visit: [www.healthforceminnesota.org](http://www.healthforceminnesota.org)
- **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.

- **Youth with Disabilities:** Through the use of the DEI Grant, we have encouraged our staff to continue to support youth and young adults by using Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs). The IRTs consist of the key stakeholders in the youth or young adult's lives and the team works collectively to help the youth or young adult reach their goals. Another best practice that we continue to use is implementing the Guideposts for Success as a tool for the counselors and the youth/young adults. Being able to clearly identify what supports and needs they have in the 5 key areas is a great way to create a visual aid for the youth/young adult. The youth is able to see detailed goals and feel confident in where to seek out support from if needed.
- **Career Pathways:** Youth Counselors 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 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 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 Investment 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.
- **Bridges to Healthcare:** In Olmsted County, we have a unique grant to serve specific healthcare training needs for Mayo Clinic where we employ two full time Career Navigators to assist in their transition from Adult Basic Education to WDI, RCTC, and beyond into employment. The youth programs partner with this program as well to refer individuals. In our other areas we have short-term prevocational healthcare academies to prepare individuals for the workforce in healthcare. We have also hosted renewable energy academies, manufacturing academies, and we are currently working on a pre-vocational construction/trades academy in partnership with our local apprenticeship programs.
- **Operation Starfish** is a youth employment project in cooperation with the United Way of Rochester. Youth have the opportunity to participate in short-term entry level work experience as well as learning the needed skills to find employment in the future. Often a youth will "sample" a few work environments before they settle into one. This is a hands-on exploration experience with the support of the two agencies and all the private sector employers that are represented on their boards.
- **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.
- **Emerging Leaders Grant:** It is important to establish relationships/partnerships based on trust, open communication and mutual respect. The goal 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 the programs goals and services:



- Hire UP Program:** Hire UP is a unique summer jobs program that provides youth and young adults with paid work experience to develop work and career readiness skills, engage youth into the workforce, and generate hands-on learning involvement. Hire Up also builds a partnership between businesses and youth workers. Businesses have the chance to hire summer workers and give back to the community. Youth and young adults have the ability to make money over the summer and engage in the workforce earlier.
- United Way 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.
- High School Credit** is awarded to students in many of WDI's counties for work experience activities. Students who complete their work seminar and earn a work experience activity are allowed to do those activities during the school day and earn classroom credit at the same time. In addition, youth who have yet to pass the MCA tests can meet those requirements to earn their diploma by coming to the WorkForce Center and taking the WorkKeys math or reading assessment depending on the need of the student.
- 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.

## **WSA 9 – HENNEPIN/CARVER WORKFORCE SERVICE AREA**

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

**MISSION STATEMENT:** *“The Youth Council will be an Authority on Local Youth Employment and Career Development Issues. The Council will Lead a Coordinated Effort with Community Partners to Provide Progressive and Innovative Services That will Foster the Self-Sufficiency of All Participants.”*

**YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES-HENNEPIN COUNTY:**

**WSA 9 - Hennepin-Carver maintains a commitment** to paid summer and year-round work experience learning for youth funded through state and/or 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) **Individual Placements:** youth are assigned to local non-profits, municipal sites and other agencies to provide supplemental 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, workers 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 HS credentials and peruse 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:** A paid work experience corps model for mostly older, 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 skill practice, anger management, and resume and application completion. 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 sessions (at site) concentrating on Personal Budgeting (spreadsheet application), Resume and Cover Letter composition, and Project costing (spreadsheet application). All lessons are assembled into a summer 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 Picnic where each youth receives a certificate of commendation signed by local politicians and Workforce Investment Board members. Youth also receive a copy of their portfolio (TeamTech Lessons). Youth are also eligible for Governor's Award (one per crew signed by MN Governor), and awards and gift certificates for perfect attendance.
- **Young Adult Conservation Corps:** A year round corps model for older, out-of school youth. Teams participate in intensive training and public works projects, with one day per week devoted to case managed interviewing skill practice, increasing practical job skills (plant identification, construction math, team building, anger management, and resume and application completion. A 12 week term with opportunity to apply for an additional 12 weeks on advanced team.
- **Local County Commissioner Funding:** Hennepin County Commissioners have generously dedicated county funding devoted to working with foster and youth offenders placed in summer and year-round Conservation Corps.
- **Tree Trust** focuses on basic skills deficient youth with interest to attend primarily Hennepin Technical College Post-Secondary programs (supported through TRIO and Gateway programs at North and South campuses. It also helps Out-of-School youth interested in obtaining a shorter term federally-recognized credential.

Development of internship placements is 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 plans to reshape the traditional youth placement opportunity offered to include more private sector placements.

#### **EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES-CARVER COUNTY:**

- **Southwest Metro Educational Cooperative** operates a Youthbuild Program that teaches reconstruction skills and offers academic credit to youth based on the hours they work and the school work they completed.
- **Ridgeview Medical Center for Healthcare Careers:** Youth are employed at the clinic and work in several different departments. Activities include job shadowing in every department to learn that there are many more health care careers in addition to being a doctor or nurse. Youth can also earn academic credit in this program.
- **Three Rivers Park District:** Youth are placed at Gale Woods farm (part of Three Rivers Park District) as one of our scattered sites, they work on planting and harvesting vegetables and gardens and work a bit with the public giving tours.
- **District #287:** This district (combines 17 suburban school districts in the West Metro area) refers youth with disabilities and through our combined funding pays the youth's wage, while the district provides job coaches for the youth at their work-sites. This arrangement is the same as the Job Coached Sites referenced above for Hennepin County.
- **Tree Trust:** this local non-profit ran two crews in Carver County. In addition to work readiness skills, youth are able to earn academic credit through Tree Trust programming as well.

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

**YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **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 (see: [http://mwca-mn.org/Best\\_Practices/2013/STEP%20UP%20-%20City%20of%20Minneapolis.pdf](http://mwca-mn.org/Best_Practices/2013/STEP%20UP%20-%20City%20of%20Minneapolis.pdf) for more information about STEP-UP).
- **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 including the National Forum for Youth Violence Prevention and Youthprise. Approximately 200 youth serving practitioners attended the fifth annual conference held February 13, 2015.
- **Minneapolis Teen Job and Opportunity Fair:** This annual teen job and opportunity fair provides an opportunity for teens to connect with organizations that are offering training, employment, and volunteer experiences. At workshops offered at the fair, teens learn how to conduct a job search and land a job from Minneapolis North WorkForce Center and EMERGE Community Development staff. A panel of employers facilitated by the Minneapolis Youth Congress gives advice on how young people can leave a positive impression when applying for a job. Attendees also learn how to dress professionally at a fashion show “Pro Up to Glow Up” from Aveda Institute and the Minneapolis Youth Congress.

Hennepin County librarians are also on hand to help teens fill out online resumes and with resources for their employment searches.

More than 500 teens and 40 exhibitors attended the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Minneapolis Teen Job and Opportunity Fair on April 30, 2016.

The Teen Job Fair is produced by City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development, Hennepin County, Hennepin County Library, AchieveMpls, Minneapolis WorkForce Centers, Lunds and Byerlys, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minneapolis Youth Congress, Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, EMERGE, East Side Neighborhood Services, and Aveda Institute.

### 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, while others teach basic academics, STEM curriculum, or health and nutrition.

Trainings offered in 2015 included:

### Healthcare

- 118 youth were prepared for 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.
- 13 interns participated in Scrubs Camp, a week-long camp that gives interns the chance to participate in hands-on healthcare activities and learn about health-related careers while experiencing life on the Augsburg College campus.

### Technical Career Exposure and Training

- 47 interns participated in a High Tech Innovation Day. This day-long training equips students with the tools necessary to problem-solve real-world issues, develop a product that addresses these issues using technology, and the ability to pitch their product. This training also highlighted information and skills that will better prepare youth for internships in the tech field and with emerging businesses. Students experience the day as an innovator & social entrepreneur.
- 8 interns participated in the IT Tech Tour at *Be The Match*. This experience provided an opportunity for interns to get an inside look at an organization's IT department and see how they use technology to make the world a better place. Interns learned about the variety of careers within IT, heard employees' career journeys, and did an interactive brainstorming session about adapting *Be The Match's* website for mobile phone use.
- Excel is an essential skill for the workplace but generally not taught in our schools. 72 interns completed a series of online training modules to enhance their Excel skills and prepare for more challenging positions down the road. Certification was available for youth that completed all modules during the course of the summer.
- A partnership with the Silicon North Stars program made it possible for 8 interns to travel to Silicon Valley for a week long 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 area. The camp concluded with a group project in which the students competed in teams to create and pitch their own startup ideas to a crowd of tech professionals.

### **College Exposure and Preparation**

- 105 STEP-UP Achieve interns attended 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**

- Financial services company volunteers spend a day with 33 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.
- 3 interns participated in Minnesota Business Venture (MBV), a residential summer camp for high school students to learn about leadership, financial literacy, and career options. Students work together as a “company” while gaining knowledge from numerous guest speakers and volunteers. Partnerships with BestPrep’s host campuses, St. Cloud State University and St. John’s University, allowed 3 interns to experience college life firsthand.
- 7 interns interested in legal careers participated in the 5-day Summer Legal Institute, which is an immersion program at the University of Minnesota Law School organized by Just the Beginning - A Pipeline Organization (JTB-APO). Interns visit federal courts and law firms, meet with judges and practitioners, engage in mock trials and oral argument competitions, participate in networking etiquette, professional skills and financial literacy workshops and learn about a wide variety of legal careers and required education.

### **Academic Skills**

- Over 600 STEP-UP Discover interns participated in a 3 hour weekly class during their internship. Classes tie academic skills learned in the classroom to their summer work experience and focus on personal and professional development. Classes integrate STEM, life skills, and financial literacy. Most interns are also able to earn academic credit for the classroom training paired with the on-the-job experience.

### **Outdoor Careers**

- A partnership with YouthCARE/Camp Sunrise offered STEP-UP Discover interns the chance to spend a week at a rustic camp. Many interns have never had a camping experience. This experience offers them an opportunity to participate in all the usual camp activities and introduces them to outdoor career opportunities. In addition, interns develop leadership skills and complete work projects to support the camp. Thirty-nine (39) interns spent a week at Camp Sunrise in the summer of 2015.
- Minneapolis Youth Works (funded via the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act): Credential and Paid Internship Project: Providing youth with occupational skills training and paid internships to enhance youth’s employability has been a focal point of our federally-funded youth programming. In 2015, 82 youth earned industry specific credentials and 199 participants gained work experience while earning wages through this project.

### **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.

In 2015, 90 STEP-UP Achieve interns expanded their financial knowledge at the annual U.S. Bank

Financial Education Day event run by U.S. Bank trainers. Hosted at St. Thomas's Opus College of Business, interns learned about banking, budgeting, and credit to help oversee their personal finances. They came away from this event with increased insight into how to manage their STEP-UP earnings and plan for their future.

In 2016, all STEP-UP interns will have access to AmericaSaves.org. America Saves, a campaign managed by the nonprofit Consumer Federation of America, seeks to motivate, encourage, and support low- to moderate-income households to save money, reduce debt, and build wealth.

Also in 2016, STEP-UP is partnering with Wells Fargo to bring their curriculum into the summer classes for STEP-UP Discover interns.

## **WSA 12 – ANOKA COUNTY JOB TRAINING CENTER**

**SERVICE AREA:** Anoka County

**MISSION STATEMENT:** *“Preparing Today's Youth for Tomorrow's Workforce”*

**YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **PETS Pilot Project Site:** Empowers staff serve youth with disabilities that are ages 14 – 21 that live in Anoka County and are attending secondary school and are customers of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Youth 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, teachers assistants, park workers, landscaping crew members, school maintenance workers, childcare workers, retail workers, library aides, office and clerical workers.

- **Career Pathways:** Empowers staff support and encourage young adults to complete training and earn credentials in high demand and growing occupations. Many young adults are referred to Anoka County's successful Career Connections Training. Career Connections offers industry recognized credential trainings to eligible participants who traditionally face barriers to successful employment. The trainings concentrate on three demand driven business sector career pathways in health care, precision sheet metal and business services. The training includes an in-depth assessment to assist participants in making an informed career choice, preparatory training by our Adult Basic Education partner, Metro North, enhanced academic instruction through our local MnSCU partners, career navigation services, enhanced support for individuals who self-report as disabled, job placement assistance and retention support which leads to higher skills attainment, training completion, employment at higher wages and confidence to return to college.

- **Empowers U (University):** Empowers staff facilitate trainings throughout the year called Empowers U. Empowers U is one avenue staff utilize to provide the 14 elements of WIOA to youth. Speakers are frequently brought in exposing youth to various topics such as Leadership Development, Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship, Labor Market Information and employment information about demand driven industry sectors and career exploration. This hands on training is offered to encourage responsibility and other positive social and civic behavior.
- **An Inter-Agency Collaborative** is established between the WorkForce Center (WFC), 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 monthly to ensure strong communications and linkages are maintained to better serve the young people in our area.
- **Satellite Office:** Empowers counselors keep regular hours at a satellite office on the campus of ATC which is co-located with ABE and the area alternative learning Center AHTHS. This allows staff to directly interface with and recruit potential youth candidates. Anoka County's onsite presence includes regular communication with the Financial Aid Office to identify potential low income students and with Student Success Coaches and the Trio Student Support Services/Academic Advisor to ensure that potential new and returning students are being referred to program services. Empowers staff attend bi-monthly orientations at AHTHS to meet with youth that are interested in returning to school. Empowers staff work closely with the school staff to ensure that young people about to graduate are given the Empowers application and information as part of their senior student portfolios graduation requirement.
- **Outreach to Schools:** Empowers staff complement the work of existing school counselors by providing young people and families with information needed to assist them in selecting a career and the appropriate postsecondary path to prepare for that career. Counselors guide students through career exploration providing educational information and current labor market information regarding in-demand, high growth occupations and industries throughout the region. Individual career counseling and group workshops are provided to students to help them with planning for post-secondary training, accessing financial aid, selecting an appropriate college program, career planning, goal setting and navigating business culture. Opportunities are provided to interact with local businesses and industries through business tours, business and industry speaker panels and opportunities for job shadowing and mentoring. Staff work closely with local school district staff to ensure students have access to information needed to complete all aspects of their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) prior to graduation. Staff also provide information regarding post-secondary education options, campus visits, narrowing choices of schools and advice on completing applications, applying for financial aid and completing the FAFSA.
- **Work Based Learning:** 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, OJTs and pre-apprenticeships. Occupational skill related internships are developed in both the public and private sector. An established employer network is utilized to create work experience opportunities that best align with a youth's previous employment history and future career goals.

Paid internship opportunities are developed for those youth who are participating in a Career Pathway training, postsecondary education plan and exploratory career opportunities. All these opportunities expose youth to occupations in various industry sectors that are indicating long term growth. All 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.

- **Dream It Do It:** Empowers partners annually to support Minnesota's Manufacturing Month in October. Staff coordinate several opportunities with area school districts to tour manufacturers in the area. Youth are provided an experience to tour a manufacturing facility and to visit with managers and Human Resources staff to gain a better understanding of the many career opportunities in the field. They are given information about the jobs available and the training required to be successful in this pathway.
- **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 Resource Center as general customers. Targeted mailings and e-mail blasts are sent from our partners with our marketing materials to identify dropouts that may be interested in returning to school.
- **Homeless Youth:** Empowers works closely with the YMCA and has ongoing communication regarding program services and receives many referrals from the Y's Youth Outreach Program targeting homeless youth. The YMCA sponsors different housing programs for youth that Empowers staff stay well versed on and make every effort to help connect homeless youth. In addition, staff have a good working relationship with Hope4Youth, a local drop-in center for homeless youth, and Stepping Stone Emergency Housing which is an adult homeless shelter providing emergency services for young adults age 18 and older. Anoka County recently implemented community wide Coordinated Point of Entry for all homeless individuals seeking housing assistance to better connect people with resources. The YMCA and Hope4Youth both have representatives on our Youth Standing Committee.
- **DEI Career Pathways:** The DEI project provides an opportunity for enhanced services for Out of School Youth that are 18 – 24 to increase employment and wage outcomes of young adults with disabilities. Referrals to the onsite Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) can come from our local VRS partner waiting list, during the intake process for career pathway training and general WFC customers that self-report as disabled. Older Youth (18 – 24) are offered the additional support of the DRC and Integrated Resource Team (IRT) when appropriate. The DRC forms IRTs to help support established Guideposts for Success with each individual client they are working with.
- **Connections with MFIP and SNAP partners:** MFIP and SNAP programs are co-located at the WFC allowing for ongoing regular communication between staff working in our various programs. All program staff are trained and knowledgeable of 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.

- **Teen Parents:** Outreach is enhanced to MFIP teen parents as well as those who are non-recipients of public assistance benefits. Empowers staff partner with the Anoka-Hennepin Teen Parent Program to bring classes to the WFC for tours and orientations to inform the teen parents about the Empowers program and WFC services. Staff also go to the school to teach classes based on their needs. Empowers staff also actively recruit teen parents served through the TANF Innovations Grant. These young people can be co-enrolled with Empowers to provide additional services beyond TANF Innovations timelines and scope of services.
- **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. Our staff have developed close working relationships with social workers in the Anoka County Foster Care Unit. Empowers staff are in regular communication with the Foster Unit which ensures ongoing referrals of youth most in need. The County Foster Care staff are represented on our Standing Youth Committee.

## **WSA 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 COUNCIL CHAIR:**

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### **EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **“Your Future, Moving Forward” Employment as it applies to your child** – Held at the Shakopee High School, this event for parents, teachers, students, and employers of middle and high school aged students with disabilities addressed employment topics relative to transition aged students. Experts in the field provided various employment information and were available to answer questions regarding upcoming changes to employment as it relates to persons with special needs. Topics included: Minnesota Olmstead Plan as it relates to employment for students with disabilities, how local agencies help students, the process of how to receive services, and the responsibilities of parents, students, schools and employers.
- **Recognizing Youth Achievement** – Each year, Tree Trust hosts a picnic to celebrate the accomplishments of program participants who worked on landscape crews throughout the

Dakota County area. Youth work in various city and county parks on projects such as building a 25 foot bridge, benches for a Frisbee disc course, a timber wall, as well as completing erosion control projects and other general landscaping projects. This youth program also teaches youth planning skills and rewards them with pay raises for perfect attendance. In addition to program participants, the event was well attended by parents, local officials and Youth Council members.

- **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 14-21 to enter the workforce. Dakota Electric and St. Francis Regional Medical Center sponsor and present the awards. 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 the Community** –
  - Dakota-Scott County staff participate in career fairs at area high schools on an on-going basis. Staff has students complete career assessment tools and provide information on the WorkForce Center and The Zone. Staff also conduct workshops on Interviewing, Job Hunting, Hot Jobs in Minnesota, and “What not to do when looking for a job.”
  - Scott County collaborates with Southwest Metro Education Cooperative to achieve Child Development Associates (CDA), Nursing Assistants (NA), and OSHA 10 and CPR certification.
  - Each month, staff prepares and distributes “Who’s Hiring Youth”, a newsletter which is emailed and filled with tips for young job seekers and job openings of interest to youth. The distribution list includes teachers, career counselors, past youth participants, and others working with school-aged youth and past youth participants.
- **Getting Credit** – In partnership with the Southwest Metro Educational Cooperative, Scott County offered youth needing credits the opportunity to participate in the Youthbuild and The Landing collaborative projects. 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. This year, due to transportation issues and the overall economy, it was more difficult finding worksites. Those challenges were put to the parents/guardians and youth who were then encouraged to seek out positions in the local area. This simple request doubled the number of Scott County’s worksites available to youth!
- **Financial Literacy training for youth participants** – Youth 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. As part of the program, youth attended a 3-hour seminar on a Saturday to learn the basics of finances including investing and planning ahead. Southwest Metro Educational Cooperative provided the classes.
- **Camps** – the Dakota-Scott Youth Council sponsors and promotes an annual week-long summer camp for girls in grades 5-8 which provides them with exposure to non-traditional careers. In previous years, the Youth Council provided scholarships for youth to attend the healthcare focused Scrubs Camp and Camp Enterprise, an educational, weekend

residency program for high school juniors and seniors. In addition, the Workforce Development Board has sponsored the TXT 2015 camp at Dakota County Technical College and the recent Construct Tomorrow event at Canterbury Park in Shakopee.

- **Foster Care Youth** – Staff in both counties are working closer with youth aging out of the area county-based foster care programs. Dakota County and Scott County are active with the Link/Passages transition youth in work experience, training, job search and support services.

## **WSA 15 – RAMSEY COUNTY WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS, INC.**

**SERVICE AREA:** Ramsey County

**MISSION STATEMENT:** *“Supporting and building a foundation for all youth to thrive as healthy, productive members of our community.”*

### **YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

Karin McCabe

Business

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### **LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Nerita Hughes

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

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### **EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

#### **Best Practices:**

**The Outreach to Schools** initiative has been expanded to serve students at the Roseville, North St. Paul, Humboldt, and Como High Schools. Four interns are providing this service.

**The Youth Council** has identified four primary strategic goals as part of the 2014-2015 Youth Council Work plan. These goals include:

1. Encouraging the alignment of the educational system with worker and industry needs;
2. Improving the availability and quality of workforce counseling in junior high and high schools to support the World’s Best Workforce legislation;
3. Encouraging additional development of technical track options in high schools; and
4. Increasing outreach and program services to out-of-school youth.

**The Youth Council has taken a leadership role in promoting Job Corps** coordination strategies and assisting young offenders in re-entering the community.

**Ramsey County Workforce Solutions has initiated a ‘credential’ based Customer Services Training** at St. Paul College. Many youth obtain a credential every year.

**Ramsey County Workforce Solutions has a cooperative program with Ramsey County Corrections Juvenile Probation called “Invest in You.”** “Invest in You” offers a critical thinking/customer service class followed by a two-week readiness training and a 100-hour work experience leading to unsubsidized employment. The goal is to reduce recidivism and increase graduation rates for youth. Youth offenders are referred by probation offices. Over 50 youth are served per year.

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## **WSA 16 – WASHINGTON COUNTY WORKFORCE CENTER**

**SERVICE AREA:** Washington County

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

**YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

LeeAnn Cox- Business  
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Christine Main, Youth Program Coordinator  
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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

• **Career Assessment and Exploration:** The Washington County Youth Council participates in a biannual Career Day event held at Century College and sponsored by Northeast Metro 916 Career and Technical Education Center. The event serves high schools throughout Washington County and exposes students to career and educational opportunities and career pathways. Youth are given the opportunity to explore careers of interest, hear from industry professionals and tour programs available during high school through the Career and Technical Education Center and after high school through Century College.

The Youth Council also participates in 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 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.

Youth enrolled in the Youth Program have the opportunity to discover their interests, preferences and personal styles through the use of the Strong Interest Inventory assessment. Youth take the online assessment and then attend a workshop to discuss results. In the workshop, youth are provided a personalized report that illustrates how their interests and preferences link to various jobs, work setting and career fields. Careers of interest are then explored through the use of sites such O\*Net and CAREERwise

Education (formally ISEEK.org) and through work experience placements.

• **Work Readiness Training:** Youth participate in Work Readiness Training through an interactive workshop entitled “Workplace Success.” The workshop 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 participate in Tree Trust’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) have the opportunity to earn elective academic credit during the course of their summer employment 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). The youth participants complete word processing 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 in order to earn the credit(s).

• **Community Partnerships:** Family Means is a community based program that provides after school and summer programming for children and teens in low income communities. The Youth Program provides wages for youth workers to work as program assistants. The collaboration allows older youth to serve as mentors. The result is that older youth increase their leadership and work readiness skills and younger youth have positive role models within their own community. Many younger youth have been overhead saying that they want to be a program assistant when they get older.

In 2013, we added a collaboration to develop a community supported garden (CSA). 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 were exposed to new foods and recipes for preparation were provided. Due to the success of the project, the community has given more garden space to our program and has allowed the produce harvested to be sold in their community gas station. They also have a stand that is open every Friday for the community to purchase produce. The youth now are learning customer service skills and gaining money handling experience.

## WSA 17 – 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.”*

**YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

Jim Wagner, Superintendent & Community Educator  
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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

- **Federally-Funded Youth Programs (WIA and 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 – 21 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.
- **The Youthbuild Program** is operated in collaboration with the St. Cloud Area School District 742, Area Learning Center and Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity. Youthbuild provides an opportunity for high school dropouts and potential dropouts to focus on completing high school while working part-time on Habitat for Humanity Projects. Youthbuilders learn basic safety and construction skills while improving the availability of low-income housing in the community.
- **Outreach to Schools** places three interns in seven area high schools to provide career exploration, career fairs, job search assistance, college information and current labor market information to youth and families. Outreach to Schools is supported by funding

from the Initiative Foundation. This additional funding allows SBETC 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.

- **Higher Education and Career Advising Pilot (HECAP)** provides career counseling activities during the 2013/2014 school year to high school students in District 742. SBETC is one of four pilot sites. This project is funded by the Minnesota Legislature and supported by Senator Bonoff.
- **Discovery Academy** is a high school initiative of the St. Cloud Technical and Community College. It provides an opportunity to take college courses in a high school setting and earn a college transcript. The Discovery Academy website connects teachers, learners and business partners with worksite learning opportunities.
- **Project Lead the Way (PLTW)**, a pre-engineering/engineering technology curriculum challenges high school students to consider Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) careers.
- **Students Technology and Robots (S.T.A.R.) Camp**, an initiative stemming from the St. Cloud Technical and Community College's partnership with 360° Center of Excellence for Manufacturing and Applied Engineering, promotes engineering/manufacturing to a younger audience of students in an attempt to trigger interest and appreciation for the career field.
- **Career and Technical Education Programs** offer excellent after school and summer opportunities. Career & Technical Education, College Bound, Business Education Partnerships of St. Cloud Area School District 742 offer creative options including Camps to Careers (S.T.E.M. Academy, Digital Media Academy, Health Care Academy), and F4 Focus on the Future - Family Forums.
- **Partners for Student Success** is a community initiative began 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 with huge challenges facing children in the greater St. Cloud area including increasingly poverty, immigration status, and increasing expectations for success.
- **Cradle to Career** is an initiative of community organizations, business and education working together to "support student success through a cradle to career approach for education and workforce development." Key partners include: Stearns Benton Employment & Training Council, United Way of Central Minnesota, Partner for Student Success, Initiative Foundation, Central Minnesota Community Foundation, Readiness Pipeline, Center for Service Learning & Social Exchange, University of Minnesota Extension, Child Care Choices, St. Cloud Area School District and the Greater St. Cloud Area Development, identify cooperative ventures and new resources and measure our impact through common goals. This is one of eight current community priorities identified in our Central Minnesota area that is getting significant traction.
- **Youth Zone** at the Minnesota WorkForce Center – St. Cloud offers a special place for youth to access universal services of the Minnesota WorkForce Center.

- Collaboration efforts are underway with the **Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation Talent Corps (GSDC Talent Portal)** in setting up a portal for employers to list opportunities for youth in their workplaces. **The St. Cloud Chamber's Workforce Development Committee** is also partnered in these efforts and is a major player in developing internships for local youth at local companies in specific industries. The GSDC Talent Corps portal will be a one stop access for youth to access a listing of work experience sites, job shadow opportunities, internships, and etc.

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## **WSA 18 – WINONA COUNTY WORKFORCE COUNCIL**

**SERVICE AREA:** Winona County

**MISSION STATEMENT:** *“To assist individuals, employers and the community in achieving economic success by acting as a link to people and job opportunities, while providing employment related services to job seekers and employers.”*

**YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR:**

Rotating Chair

**LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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**EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:**

**Best Practices**

- Careers Camp is a Career Exploration Camp of local sector based jobs using hands-on activities to better understand education and training requirements, activities commonly done, skills required and local Labor Market for the job. Each year the camp has a theme to help engage participants in learning.
- Assist with organizing and supporting two Educational Science Camps (Nano and GUESS - Girls Understanding & Exploring STEM Stuff) that focuses on exposing and exciting high school aged students to science related technology. These camps are offered in conjunction with RINTEK and MN State College Southeast Technical Nano Projects.
- The Youth Program collaborates with Community Education to offer classroom assistance in taking the National Career Readiness Credential and to improve basic math and reading skills. Those successfully earning the credential have the opportunity to do practice interviews with NCRC employers.
- WorkForce Center staff continue to promote the Youth Zone website through outreach presentation to area schools, program participant orientation, business cards and social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter). This avenue helps to further a virtual presence for young adults.

- An enhanced summer orientation for youth participants in the summer work program to offer a three part series. The first part reviews information on child labor laws, work site responsibilities, how to keep a job, managing money and safety on the job. Part of the training uses computer games created by staff. The second part covers job seeking skills to help youth find their next job. Finally, the third part uses a laptop lab for students to write up-to-date resumes and cover letters.
- Year round program participants may now go through a pre-work safety orientation and assessment on the web. Safety on the job site is one of the most important things to keep in mind when working at any job. All employees have a Right to Know about the hazardous materials used in your work area and the potential effects of these materials upon your health and safety. At the end of the course, participants assess themselves on potential hazards in the workplace. Assessment results are sent directly to the WorkForce Center for verification.
- Distributed “Know Your Rights” books to Work Experience Coordinators in Winona County schools. Completed an accompanying activity guide manual that WorkForce Center staff use during outreach workshops.
- Use of college interns to do outreach to schools in Winona County that promote the youth program, WorkForce Center services, job seeking skills and career exploration activities.
- Developed an E-Mentoring program between local business and students at the Alternative Learning Center, originally developed by the University of Minnesota.
- Developed a questionnaire using Survey Monkey for youth program participants to offer comments, opinions and requests to the Youth Council and Workforce Investment Board. Students may be assisted by classroom teachers or provide input on their own time online/in-person/e-mail. Survey results are reviewed by the Youth Council when determining annual goals

### **Strategies**

1. Promote Career Awareness of jobs available in our area and skills/training needed to be successful in the field.
  - Career Camp
  - Robotics Camp – partner with University of Minnesota Extension
  - Job Seeking Skills Workshop
  - Paid Work Experience
  - Training Scholarships for out of school youth
  - Outreach Efforts – partner with Winona State University
2. Grow the Youth Zone and Social Networking Sites that offer a virtual presence for youth adults to gain accurate job seeking skills information and career exploration assistance.
3. Educate Work Experience Teachers and participants of available “FastTRAC” training and Bridging programs that can help with preparing or exploring a career.
4. Continue to explore ways to engage Older Youth in gaining competency in literacy documented through testing.

5. Grow the E-Mentoring Program with other school districts in Winona County. Promote E-Mentoring success through presentation to the state-wide ALC conference.

*Minnesota*<sup>TM</sup>

Department of Employment and Economic Development

OFFICE OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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