

Youth Committee RESOURCE GUIDE



Cooperative
Youth Services
and Best
Practices

2020

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

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 (per Sec. 681.120 in WIOA Final Rules found in <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15975.pdf>):

- Recommend policy direction to the LWDB for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth;
- Recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system to ensure a full range of services and opportunities for all youth, including disconnected youth;
- Recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth;
- Recommend ways to coordinate youth services and recommend eligible youth service providers;
- Provide on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs;
- Assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth; and
- If so delegated by the LWDB after consultation with the chief elected official (CEO), oversee eligible youth providers, as well as other youth program oversight responsibilities.

The Youth Committee Membership (per Sec.681.110 in WIOA Final Rules found in <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15975.pdf>) shall include the following as described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):

- Chaired by a member of the LWDB 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;
- The Committee must reflect the needs of the local area. Members may represent agencies such as secondary and postsecondary education, training, health, disability, mental health, housing, public assistance, and justice, or be representatives of philanthropic or economic and community development organizations, and employers. The committee may also include parents, participants, and youth.

A LWDB may designate an existing entity such as an effective youth council as the standing youth committee if it fulfills the requirements above in the first two bullets.

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

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Young Adult Program Web Page:

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

Resources to Support Workforce Development Boards and Youth Employment Web Page:

<https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/02/26/14/40/Resources-to-Support-Workforce-Development-Boards>

<https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/03/29/20/42/Resources-to-Support-Youth-Employment>

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WDA 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”*

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

The Northern Valley Career Expo: Rural Minnesota 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 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. Outreach-to-Schools (OTS) activities are coordinated with school administrators and counselors, teachers and Tech. Prep. Coordinators.

HUD Youth Demonstration Grant: ICCC provides assistance to homeless youth. Currently ICCC is partnering on a project to create a comprehensive homeless response system in the Northwest Minnesota Region for unaccompanied youth, ages 16-24 years, making youth homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. The project serves the Northwest Minnesota Continuum of Care (CoC) 12-county geographic area including: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Roseau, and Red Lake. ICCC’s specific project works with neighboring Community Action Agencies and provides resources in all counties except Beltrami. A specific component of this comprehensive response system is working on employment with homeless youth. This project will coordinate, build on and expand the existing collaboration with the employment and training services dedicated to serving the youth in the region. These would include working with WIOA in school and out of school partners as well as the Minnesota Youth Program. They will also work with other mainstream and private market employers and training programs to develop on-the job training and foster new relationships and programs. Job Training Specialists and homeless case managers currently meet with participants simultaneously to reduce the amount of times the participant needs to come to a local office and approach case management as a team approach. ICCC, as a member of CoC, was awarded the Homeless Youth Demonstration Grant from HUD and will work to provide wrap around services, not just employment and training, to homeless youth. In light of this work with homeless youth WDA 1 has obtained a waiver to use 40% of it’s WIOA youth funds to work with in-school youth to combat homelessness.

Pre-ETS Partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation

Services: ICCC has contracted with VRS to provide Pre-Employment Transitional Services (Pre-ETS) to youth that are potentially eligible for VRS Services. ICCC staff receive referrals from VRS to provide one or multiple of the Pre-ETS. These services include:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

Electronic Document Storage (EDS): ICCC has gone paperless with casefiles. Using the Electronic Document Storage feature on Workforce One all applications, eligibility, program and other pertinent documents saved online. Caseworkers submit documents as they collect them to the home office where they are uploaded and categorized for easy future access. By having office staff consistently categorize the documents it makes it easy to audit files to see if required documents are missing or if files are complete and up to date. This also aides in monitoring so the monitor doesn't need to search through file after file to find a specific document.

WDA 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.”*

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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 decade.

The ultimate goal of this service is to provide a means for high school students to develop an individual career plan through a higher level of

student interaction and based on the latest career information.

Additionally, Minnesota Legislature authorized and funded the Higher Education and Career Advising Project (HECAP) to provide Career Advising services in Minnesota. This project is specifically designed to provide career advising services, to include career awareness, career planning, and regional occupations in demand to high schools to assist youth to form and develop post-secondary plans and make informed career choices. RMCEP is providing HECAP services in several area High Schools and Area Learning Centers within Central and West Central MN.

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 4,500 high school students in Central and West Central Minnesota through these services in the upcoming year.

Work Experience: We incorporate program activities to instill work ethic, work maturity, and employability skills employers desire and to prepare youth for apprenticeships, employment, and/or post-secondary success. One of the most valuable activities we employ is Work Experience, where youth can “learn and do” in an environment that closely matches their career interest. This is a planned, structured learning experience that provides an opportunity for assessment, intervention strategies, and demonstration of job retention skills. These are measured using an Evaluation of Trainee Performance and Behaviors tool which is tied to the participant’s Work Readiness goal in their ISS/ Employment Plan.

These skill areas are reviewed:

1. Reliability
2. Interpersonal Relationships
3. Work Site Appropriateness
4. Problem Solving
5. Communication Skills
6. Productivity
7. Accuracy
8. Safety

Most participants show progress from the start of the work experience through the end of that activity. Orientation to Work Skills increases success in areas needed for lifelong employment.

Sustainability of Round 7 Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) best practices:

RMCEP has woven the evidence-based practices and approaches of DEI into all youth programs. Guideposts for Success and Integrated Resource Teams (IRT) are best practices that have proven invaluable for all youth as they make a successful transition into adulthood. Youth programs serve ages 14 through 24 through person-centered assessments, employment plans, services, and interventions. Guideposts for Success 2.0 was recently released with the same five areas:

1. School-Based Preparatory Experiences
2. Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences
3. Youth Development and Leadership
4. Connecting Activities
5. Family Engagement

Guideposts for Success, a product of the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), along with the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), continues to identify additional supports, opportunities, and services that youth with disabilities may need to achieve independence. The 2.0 version contains "Youth Competencies" to expand knowledge, skills, and attitudes that foster maturity. It also emphasizes the dual significance of the roles of families and professionals in their support of youth and young adults.

Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) are youth-driven opportunities to pull in partner services or funding to provide customized responses to barriers as they are identified. RMCEP has adapted the Youth Action Plan to provide a mobile tool to respond quickly and with the right makeup of team members to sustain the forward trajectory of the participant on their career pathway.

Guideposts for Success 2.0 can be found under Reports > Technical Assistance on <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/>

Other content developed under Round 7 DEI Youth Career Pathways, including IRT models, can be found under Documents and Forms > Chapter 9 on <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp>

Youth Focus Groups: Each summer the youth coordinators in each CareerForce Location in our service 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.

Youth Council:

The RMCEP Youth Council has identified the following strategies as key priorities for 2020:

1. Resiliency: Staff will understand the causes of Adverse Childhood Experiences and its long-term effects on employability. Staff will have the knowledge to respond appropriately
2. Financial Literacy: teach financial literacy as a life-long practice to promote financial responsibility.
3. Leadership: Expand leadership opportunities for participants through community connections.
4. Employability Skills: establish clear directives that define and reward employability skills.
5. Career Planning: Provide career planning and development to launch life-long successful decision making.

RMCEP Provider Affiliate of American Dream Employment Network (ADEN):

RMCEP provides the Ticket to Work Program to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries to reconnect them to their career pathway. This is especially important for youth who turn 18 and become SSA beneficiaries under the adult status. We can build on the success they have had in youth programs and provide up to 78 months of benefit and work incentive advisement through the Ticket to Work program.

WDA 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.”*

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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:** WDA 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: Job Skills, U Plan Your Future, Study-Time and Tutoring.
- **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.

WDA 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 COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **Interagency Referrals:** Duluth Workforce Development’s YES Duluth program maintains a strong referral network that effectively connects youth with the program. This core network includes ISD 709 Counselors, Life House, Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, SOAR Career Services, YWCA, Valley Youth Center, The Hills Neighborhood Youth Services (NYS), Denfeld Full Service Community School and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Counselors. YES Duluth staff meet regularly with area partners to effectively refer youth to appropriate services and to communicate regarding eligibility, program elements, support services and incentives.
- **Outreach Strategies:** YES Duluth staff are continually building relationships and extending into the community to connect with youth in greatest need of support. Connections most recently formed are with Men as Peacemakers, MN Teen Challenge, Community Action Duluth (CAD), Lutheran Social Services, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Lake Superior College, and the Family in Transition Program with ISD 709, Harbor City International Charter School, Arrowhead Juvenile Corrections center (AJC). Additionally, YES Duluth participates in multiple events throughout the year including Construct Tomorrow, Northland Career Fair, Pathways to Careers, NERCC Transition Fairs, community resource fairs, and mock interview events with area high schools, all of which focus on leading individuals to success in employment and furthering training.
- **Opportunity Youth of Duluth (OYOD) Initiative:** OYOD is a collaborative effort involving SOAR Career Solutions, The Hills, Life House, Adult Basic Education and YES Duluth as an effort to provide a comprehensive support system to help our community’s hardest to serve youth. OYOD gives under-served and under-represented youth an opportunity to fulfill areas of need including housing, employment and education, mental health services, chemical dependency treatment, and more.
- **Senior Survey ISD 709 Collaboration:** A collaboration with ISD 709 Career Center staff provides YES Duluth with an opportunity to utilize information collected through a year-end Senior Survey to identify youth in need of support to remain engaged in their high school education and/or transition from high school to post-secondary education. With a full-time YES Duluth staff working in the area high schools, strategic efforts to connect with in-school youth as they transition to out-of-school status are underway with a primary goal of engaging youth in education, employment and other program elements before they disconnect from the school system.
- **Work Readiness Training:** YES Duluth incorporates a program structure during the early stages of a youth’s enrollment that covers one-on-one job preparation, career planning, and Labor Market Information. To keep current Labor Market Information (LMI) accessible, an LMI Snapshot directed toward youth is updated bi-annually and shared with participants. In addition to individualized work readiness guidance and counseling, a weekly drop-in Individual Assistance workshop is offered to youth both engaged in and entering the program. Topics include career pathways, self-awareness, goal setting, employability skills, confidence and preparation, resilience and conflict management and other work readiness skills. As a best practice, job counselors utilize tools and assessments from Career EdVentures, the Holland Code and Careerwise Education to support individuals in developing their own career pathways and plan for obtaining stackable credentials in post-secondary education.

- **Business Partnerships:** YES Duluth continually works to diversify its pool of employers that provide Work Experience to our youth participants. When establishing relationships with local businesses, we strive for a balance of LMI-based employer connections and person-centered employment options. Beyond Work Experience, job counselors are making connections with local businesses for the purpose of informational interviewing and job shadows as we discover youth's goals and interests in career pathways.
- **Financial Literacy:** YES Duluth utilizes a variety of financial literacy curricula including managing credit education in partnership with Wells Fargo, and the use of Your Money, Your Goals Technical Assistance training from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. One of our partner agencies, Adult Basic Education, offers financial literacy quarterly in a 3-day seminar. Furthermore, YES Duluth has incorporated financial literacy into one-on-one sessions to provide relevant information based on the age, experience, and needs of the individual.
- **Higher Education Career Advisory Project:** YES Duluth has a full-time youth employment specialist working in the Career Centers at East and Denfeld High Schools and, as part of HECAP, there is a concerted effort to engage with and serve minority populations. To reach more students of color and augment the partnership with the Career Centers, YES Duluth is strengthening relationships with school integration specialists and the American Indian Home based student liaison. Activities will complement the work of school guidance counselors and part-time career center staff and provide greater opportunities for students to:
 1. Identify and explore areas of career interest,
 2. Gain exposure to different occupations through tours and other opportunities;
 3. Gain work experience and internship opportunities that help prepare students for future work;
 4. Receive individualized assistance with development of a plan that puts them on track for success in work and life.
- **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS):** The intention of Pre-ETS is to introduce career pathways to VRS-eligible youth and to provide opportunities related to job exploration, work-based learning, post-secondary education planning, work readiness training, and self-advocacy skill development. Our aim is to reach the students that are not served through special education services at the school and may not otherwise be eligible for other grant funding. Youth participating in Pre-ETS must be referred, authorized, and enrolled by a VRS counselor before service delivery.

WDA 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 COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Youth with Disabilities

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Career You)

In partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), CMJTS provides Pre-Employment Transition Services to youth with disabilities, ages 14-21, who are potentially eligible for VRS services. Career You provides an opportunity for these youth to explore career and training options, gain work skills, and learn how to be successful after high school, including post-secondary education and/or competitive employment.

Through Career You, youth participate in a 12-week curriculum, one-on-one or through large group activities, centered on job search/exploration, post-secondary education counseling, work-based learning, budgeting, work-readiness training, self-advocacy instruction, and community learning projects.

Integrated Service Delivery

Through participation of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), CMJTS continues to provide services to youth with disabilities. These services focus on the following key approaches: implementing the Guidepost to Success, incorporating Integrated Resource Teams, and increasing services to Ticket to Work beneficiaries. In addition, CMJTS recognizes the challenge youth face when understanding their social security disability benefits, therefore, CMJTS has three certified work incentives counselors to assist youth in transition in navigating the impact employment will have on their social security benefits.

TANF Youth Innovation Project

A collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), TANF Innovation serves young parents, up to age 24, who are receiving cash assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). It also serves youth (ages 14-18) from families receiving this assistance. This program focuses on career pathways and paid work opportunities, as well as short-term training opportunities (e.g., nursing assistant certification training, forklift training) that will lead to self-sufficiency.

Youth At Work (Y@W)

With funding provided through DEED, this program focuses on improving work-readiness and career pathway awareness, while providing work-based learning and credentialed training opportunities to economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk youth. Targeted efforts focus on youth with disabilities, youth of color, and by establishing positive community ties between youth, local businesses, and colleges/trainers by providing youth with paid work-based learning and/or training opportunities that lead to industry-recognized credentials.

Leadership Development: Learn, Empower, Achieve, Discover (LEAD)

CMJTS provides leadership opportunities to youth through its LEAD program. Youth gain leadership skills utilizing a developed curriculum, which touches upon the development of group rules/culture, self-awareness, leadership, community service, goal setting, taking initiative, time management, coping skills, conflict resolution, and constructive feedback. During this program youth also take part in a group-identified, service-learning project to give back within their communities and inspire others.

Workforce Protégé Program

Workforce Protégé is an internship and mentorship program developed by CMJTS with the assistance of business leaders. For this enhanced opportunity, the business provides a youth with weekly mentoring, development of employer-valued skills along with a supervised work opportunity. The Protégé program focuses on the connection between work and personal success as well as the importance of forming positive relationships with employers and community leaders. Through this program, youth gain valuable industry knowledge from their business mentor along with hands-on exposure to their career pathway. In addition, businesses show their investment by sharing in the cost of the youth participant's wage.

Outreach to Schools (OTS)

CMJTS is currently partnering with more than 50 organizations and/or schools throughout its 11-county region to provide career counseling services to youth and their families. Schools and/or youth are provided with a list of available opportunities to meet their specific needs in areas such as: labor market information, industries in demand, planning for post-secondary school/employment, career exploration and assessments, scheduled tours of CareerForce centers, colleges, and businesses, connections to community resources, and career success skills preparation.

In addition, OTS services support larger scale, hands-on career exploration events for youth, including Construct Tomorrow, SCRUBS camps, EPIC, and IGNITE. These career exploration events provide high school students with hands-on, interactive activities to better understand what it's like to do work associated with their career fields of interest.

OTS also provides opportunities to explore high-opportunity career pathways through entrepreneurship, such as the Aspiring Entrepreneur training at Wright Technical Center. As an example, 14 OTS students visited the CEO in the Classroom program for a special presentation to learn from Morgan Baum, owner of Clay Coyote Pottery Gallery. Students enjoyed the chance to learn from her small business development knowledge. During the session students were able to work on steps to plan, start, or expand and improve upon their own small businesses.

WDA 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: “To guide the coordination of services that fully develops the employment potential of youth in Southwest Minnesota.”

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES IN SW MINNESOTA:

Outreach to Schools (OTS) & Higher Education Career Advisory Project (HECAP)

The goal of HECAP is to provide services which will impact and improve the way youth view their future opportunities. The focus is to see more individuals achieve training beyond high school in an effort to break the cycle of poverty. The definition of college for HECAP purposes is “Any post high school training opportunity resulting in an earned credential ranging from a certificate to a bachelor’s degree and beyond”. HECAP services are available to youth, young adults, parents, and school districts in the region. The purpose of HECAP is to identify and address unmet needs while implementing a strategy for delivering effective educational planning, career counseling and labor market information. The PIC Youth Programs work in partnership with school districts to ensure all youth have access to employment and training services including education and career planning; post-secondary planning; assistance with applications; financial aid; scheduling campus visits; job search; assistance with employment applications; resume writing skills; industry tours; career fairs;

career and college readiness days; Career Pathway training, and other related services.

Labor Market Information

Providing labor market information to students, parents and school counselors to create awareness of career opportunities in high-growth, in-demand occupations is critical. Region 5 has developed and distributes labor market infographics that are easy to understand and are shared through school newsletters, websites, parent emails and social media posts.

The launch of the labor market campaign “Know Before You Go” provides infographics on wages by education level, annual tuition increases, cost of a degree, and in-demand jobs in the region. The following information are examples of the information that was provided to school counselors, principals, superintendents and workforce partners in the region. To view these graphics please visit our website at: <http://www.swmnpic.org/resource-center/know4yougolmigraphics/>

As our labor market campaign evolves, each infographic and infographic profile, when assembled, will create an industry summary through pictures/graphs/charts/etc. which will be geared toward students and parents. We will partner with schools as part of the dissemination process. Schools can use the infographics as they see fit. To create these infographics, each of the local workforce areas (LWA) will utilize their local industry profiles to create these items. Our intent is that there will be three components: 1) Occupation Profiles, 2) general graphics addressing pathways, and an infographic industry profile. The Rural Career Counseling Coordinators (RC3) have agreed to divide and conquer the industries- so each LWA will focus on 1-3 industries. In Region 5, our focus will be developing infographics that are easy to understand and are shared through school newsletters, websites, parent emails and social media posts for healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology.

Work Based Learning (WBL) Opportunities

Business and youth both benefit from work-based learning (WBL) since the training is tailored specifically to the needs of business and the needs of the participants. The end result of WBL placements is increased productivity and engagement from the worker. Work-based learning supports a broader pipeline of workers by connecting businesses to a pool of underrepresented populations that may otherwise have difficulty engaging. In order to realize these benefits, business partners are engaged in

the career pathway program design and curriculum development to ensure it meets their business needs.

In order for youth to develop the skills necessary to be successful in a work environment, PIC Youth Staff address identified barriers by providing experiential and work-based learning opportunities for youth. Work-based Learning opportunities include work experience, on-the-job training, and internships with an emphasis on high growth, high wage career placements. PIC Youth Staff recruited and placed more than 80 youth in private sector work-based learning experiences in 2017.

Youth are matched with an employer based on identified career interests. The majority of the worksites have fewer than 10 employees. This close connection develops into quality mentoring relationships. To foster this bond, staff provides the employer with support and resources related to mentoring tips, practices, and activities.

Career Pathway Initiatives

In addition to providing standard work-experience activities, PIC's Youth and Adult Career Pathway initiatives enable youth to better understand the connection between work and success, to learn basic work habits and skills, to form a positive relationship with leaders in their communities, and to develop meaningful education and/or employment goals through mentoring provided by the employer, PIC staff and partner staff. As part of the PIC Youth and Adult Career Pathway initiatives, an employer agrees to provide youth and young adults a job which will help the participant make the connection between training and long-term employability.

Supervision includes the provision of clear expectations and feedback to the youth and regular communication with PIC staff. The employer also agrees to provide mentoring and create opportunities along the career pathway for future advancement. Through the career pathway trainings, the participants also earn industry recognized certificates such as Certified Nursing Assistant, welding, and others.

Career Fairs and Career and College Readiness Opportunities

For the past 15 years, Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board has sponsored the regional Career Expo event. Education, workforce agencies and regional businesses cooperate to provide regional "Career Exploration Days" for high school students. 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 serve nearly 2,000

students from several local schools with involved the cooperation from over 290 volunteers from the following partners.

- Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium
- The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc.
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- Southwest Minnesota State University
- SW/WC Service Cooperative
- Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce
- Marshall Area Chambers of Commerce
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Montevideo, Marshall, and Worthington Workforce Centers
- Regional businesses and service agencies

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>

Youth Intervention Program (YIP)

YIP is designed to target services to youth transitioning out of foster care. Participants receive career and life skills curriculum to explore and identify positive education, career and life goals. Participants are also involved in various work based learning activities.

Minnesota Disability Employment Initiative:

The SW MN Private Industry Council is participating in the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) to provide services to youth with disabilities. DEI is a three-year Department of Labor Grant that was awarded to Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. The project focuses on the following key strategic approaches: Guideposts for Success, Integrated Resource Teams, Partnership & Collaboration, and increasing the number of Employment Networks throughout the state. Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) announced it is now a member of the American Dream Employment Network (ADEN).- ADEN is the first national administrative Employment Network providing face-to-face services to individuals receiving Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits under the Ticket to Work program. For individuals receiving SSA disability benefits, the return to gainful employment can be complicated and challenging. SSA recognizes the challenges that beneficiaries face in returning to work and, as a result, are able to offer supports to individuals who have the goal of achieving financial self-sufficiency, through its Ticket to Work program.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Innovation Pilot Project

The TANF Innovation Pilot Project was funded through a collaborative effort between the MN Department of Human Services and MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The project is designed to increase employment opportunities for MFIP teen parents, ages 16-24, and younger youth, ages 14-18 who are on the grant in MFIP households. The focus is to assist youth in addressing barriers which impair their ability to make successful transitions from school to work, apprenticeship, the military, or post-secondary education training and improve the individuals long term employability skills. The project builds on successful on-going business driven, short-term training initiatives and offers integrated training, job readiness, job placement services and support services to targeted populations.

Pre- Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) has become a limited use vendor to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) funding to help Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) eligible youth participate and be successful in the stages of career development, including career awareness; career exploration, career preparation, and career placement; while playing a primary role in helping students and their families navigate the complex multi-agency career pathways system. Funds support a Career Advisor, whose focus is exclusively on students with disabilities, helping them explore career options and develop plans for transition from high school to post-secondary training and/or competitive employment. The Career Advisor provides the link necessary to match students with disabilities to gainful employment through individualized needs assessment and comprehensive services such as career planning, postsecondary career education, systems linkages and service coordination, and other promising practices such as work experiences, career exploration, and work-readiness skills training.

Individual/one-on-one services include:

- Career awareness (develop self-awareness by researching careers which align with their skills, values, and interests identified through career assessments)
- Discussions and information on non-traditional employment options, and identification of career pathways of interest to the students)
- Work-based learning experiences
- Career preparation
- Self-advocacy discussions
- Work-readiness skills training

- Career placement
- Wraparound and support services, based on individual need

Group services include:

- Career awareness (employer panels, business tours, campus visits)
- Career exploration (field trips, business tours, service-learning)
- Information on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, including information about admission processes and support resources;
- Work-readiness skills training (labor market knowledge, job search techniques, daily living skills, positive work habits, developing motivation, effective coping and problem solving skills, etc.)
- Career placement (discussions and information is shared in a classroom setting on ways to maintain and advance in employment)
- Self-advocacy instruction (personal rights and responsibilities, youth leadership activities)

WDA 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 COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICE STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **Outreach to Schools/Higher Education Career Advisor Project/Partners in Career Exploration:** The Higher Education Career Advisor Project implemented a two-prong approach to providing career counseling services to students utilizing Partners in Career Exploration (PICE) interns and MN Valley Action Council (MVAC) staff. Schools are provided a menu of career exploration and career counseling opportunities and interns/staff work with individual schools to provide the services specific to their needs. The interns are recruited from the first year graduate students in the Student Counseling Program at Minnesota State University-Mankato.
- **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.
- **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.

- **TANF Youth Project:** Utilizes funding from MN Department of Human Services in partnership with MN Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED) to provide work experiences for teen parents receiving MFIP benefits or youth in MFIP households.
- **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/
- **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 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.
- **“Know Before You Go” Labor Market Campaign:** As result of our regional planning efforts, Southwest and South Central Minnesota identified a great need to provide labor market information to students, parents and school counselors to create awareness of career opportunities in high-growth, in-demand occupations. We have embarked on a joint effort across Region 5 to distribute labor market infographics that are easy to understand and can be shared on school newsletters, websites, parent emails and social media posts. The launch of the labor market campaign “Know Before You Go” shared infographics on education and wage range by education level, annual tuition increases, cost of a degree, and demand jobs in the region. The information was sent to school counselors, principals, superintendents and workforce partners in the region.
The initiative has expanded to industry specific infographics for healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, agriculture, transportation, construction, business and education. The infographics feature a variety of occupations in each industry and compare education, important qualities, job description, employment opportunities and work environment. The infographics can be found at: <http://www.workforcecouncil.org/labor-market-information/>
- **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
- **Construct Tomorrow:** Youth participated in Construct Tomorrow which is an interactive career fair that provides hands on experiences in each of the construction trades to explore students to union apprenticeship opportunities.
- **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.

WDA 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 COMMITTEE CHAIR:

Rotating

LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **The SE MN Workforce Development Board** has an innovative committee structure based on industrial sectors and careers that are in demand. Contact the WDA for a copy of the strategic plan for the LWDB and the Emerging Workforce Taskforce Goals. For more information visit: www.careerforcemn.com/so/group/684
- **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.
- **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 Development 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.
- 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:
- Steele County Works 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.

WDA 9 – HENNEPIN/CARVER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT 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.”

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES-HENNEPIN COUNTY:

WDA 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) Internships:** youth are assigned to local organizations to provide 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 explore 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 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 and employment readiness skill practice, conflict management, resume and application completion, financial literacy and team building. 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 lessons (at the job site) using mobile computer labs. The lessons are focused on Personal Budgeting (spreadsheet application), Resumes, Job Applications, and Career Discovery. All lessons are assembled into a digital 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 Celebration where each youth receives a certificate of commendation signed by local politicians and Workforce Development 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 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 with the goal of job placement. 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 sustainable skills for youth interested in pursuing competitive employment and/or higher education opportunities. Additionally, Tree Trust also helps youth interested in obtaining short or long term federally recognized credentials.

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.
- **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-pro it ran two crews in Hennepin County. In addition to work readiness skills, youth are able to earn academic credit through Tree Trust programming as well.

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

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR/BOARD CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **Workforce Innovation And Opportunity Act (WIOA):** City of Minneapolis has partnered with six providers to offer services to young adults with a variety of supportive needs that include but are not limited to, unemployment, homelessness, living in poverty, under educated, under employed. This network of providers, which include the following organizations: American Indian OIC (AIOIC), AVIVO, East Side Neighborhood Services (ESNS), EMERGE, HIRED and Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) all operate in many community based establishments to reach the wide population of underserved young adults in the city. Being place based in homeless shelters, schools, faith-based establishments and community centers, allows there to be a full comprehensive approach to how youth are served through WIOA. One of the innovative ways our providers have served young adults is to offer services within a specific demographic community. AIOIC offers supportive services in community to

address the specific needs of American Indian youth as well as offering onsite training open to the public and a myriad of other services for education to employment growth.

- **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.
- ▶ **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, others teach basic academics, STEM curriculum, or health and nutrition. Trainings offered in 2019 included:
 - ▶ **Healthcare**
 - Approximately 180 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.
 - Approximately 10 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**
 - Excel is an essential skill for the workplace but generally not taught in our schools. Approximately 100 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 summer.
 - A partnership with the Silicon North Stars program made it possible for 11 interns to take place in a 5-day 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**

- 75 Step Up Level 2 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**

- During Financial Services Careers Day, company volunteers spend a day with 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. In 2019, 40 interns participated in this event.

➤ **Academic Skills**

- In 2019, eligible Step Up interns had the opportunity to earn academic credit for their training and work experience. This was the second-year phase of a pilot program in partnership with Project for Pride and Living (PPL) to align Step Up curriculum with the Minneapolis Public Schools' credit career readiness seminar. A total of 865 Step Up interns earned academic credit in 2019.

➤ **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 2019, 110 Step Up Level 2 interns expanded their financial knowledge at the annual U.S. Bank Financial Education Day event run by U.S. Bank trainers. Hosted at the University of Minnesota Carlson School 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.

- **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.
- **Minneapolis Teen Job and Opportunity Fair:** This annual teen job and opportunity fair provides area youth a welcoming venue to connect with employers and organizations offering training, education, employment, and volunteer experiences. Minneapolis Youth Congress Employment Committee members assist not only with event planning, promotion and management, but also with creating and delivering an interactive workshop to open the Fair. Teens arrive prior to the event opening for a Prep Rally, updating their resumes, researching companies and applying to openings on-line. Additional event partners include Achieve, Hennepin County Libraries, Hennepin County Human Resources, the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development, and the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board.

WDA 12 – ANOKA COUNTY JOB TRAINING CENTER

SERVICE AREA: Anoka County

MISSION STATEMENT: *The Standing Youth Committee collaborates to share resources and deliver services to Anoka County young adults (ages 14 – 24) by empowering them to achieve skills, knowledge and confidence resulting in their educational, workplace and personal success.*

OUR VISION: *Empowering Young Adults to accomplish their goals through education and gaining experience leading to a successful career.*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Asset Mapping for Equity

Anoka County Job Training Center has intentionally strategized outreach opportunities to connect to communities of color, individuals with a criminal record, individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals without a high school diploma or equivalent, individuals with disabilities, individuals who are long-term unemployed, individuals with limited English Proficiency persons, and individuals and families living in poverty. Our continued progress to meet the needs of these targeted populations aligns with state's Pathways to Prosperity mission to ensure economic equality in that ALL Minnesotans will have fair and equitable access to meaningful employment and family-sustaining wages, ensuring that employers in the region are able to fill their in-demand job vacancies.

An Inter-Agency Collaborative is established between CareerForce in Blaine (formerly the WorkForce Center), 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 quarterly to ensure strong communications and linkages are maintained to better serve the young people in our area.

Satellite Office on College Campus: Empowers staff keep regular hours at a satellite office on the campus of Anoka Technical College 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 work with AHTHS staff to ensure that young people about to graduate are given the Empowers application and information as part of their senior portfolio's graduation requirement.

Career Pathways: 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 areas include: health care (nursing assistant), 911 dispatch, welding, manufacturing, and office/business services. The training includes an in-depth assessment to assist students in making an informed career choice, preparatory training by our Adult Basic Education partner, Metro North, enhanced academic instruction through our local MN State College 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.

Pre-ETS Vendor (assisting youth with disabilities): Referrals from Vocational Rehabilitation Services to serve youth with disabilities, in-school youth (grades 9-12), that live in Anoka County and are attending secondary school 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, teacher's assistants, park workers, crew members, maintenance, childcare, retail, library aides, office and clerical.

Future Leaders (developing diverse communities):

This leadership and paid work experience opportunity is possible through Anoka-Hennepin District 11 which serves young people representing diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds that are primarily juniors and seniors. These high school students are matched with elementary schools where they tutor children who have been identified as below grade expectation or at risk of failing. During the school year, the Future Leaders are also given instruction by SAA's (Student Achievement Advisor provided by the school district) that assist them in working through issues that are challenging for youth of color.

Reducing Youth Homelessness through

Partnerships: Empowers has ongoing communication with the YMCA regarding program services and receives many referrals from the Y's Youth Outreach and Intervention Programs targeting homeless youth. In addition, staff have a good working relationship with Hope4Youth, a local drop-in center for homeless youth, and Stepping Stones Shelter which is an adult homeless shelter providing emergency services for young adults age 18 and older. Staff maintain weekly hours at Hope4Youth and also provide 8 hours a week of intensive case management services to youth housed at Hope Place (youth shelter). Staff also work closely with Youthlink through this partnership. Empowers also works closely with Job Corp staff which serves a high population of youth that struggle with homelessness or have run away. The YMCA, Hope4Youth and Job Corp all have representatives on the Youth Standing Committee.

Internships/Work Based Learning: Paid internships are developed for youth who are participating in a Career Pathway, Postsecondary and exploratory

career opportunities. These opportunities expose youth to occupations in demand with potential for long term growth in a local industry sector. Internships are aligned with credential bearing training opportunities to accelerate the contextual learning and earning track. 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. 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, OJT's and pre-apprenticeships.

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.

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.

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. Staff have developed close working relationships with social workers in the Anoka County Foster Care Unit which ensures ongoing referrals of youth most in need. Anoka County Foster Care staff are represented on our Standing Youth Committee.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is embedded in the work experience, internship and on-the-job opportunities coordinated and/or funded in part by then ACJTC programs. Each month Youth Counselors create tips and email them to their caseload on financial topics such as savings, spending, setting up accounts, credit cards and credit reports. New this year, our team will create a fictional character and use an ongoing story to link the tips and weave some financial fun into the email messages. Storytelling is a more revered approach to information sharing about important life lessons or coming of age preparation in many cultures and so we are piloting this approach in consultation with community based organizations over the course of the next six months.

Additionally, Anoka employs a “pay-for-performance model” in our work experience program. Meaning, we provide a fifty cent per hour increase after a satisfactory or better report from a paid work experience activity.

Perkins Partnership

Empowers staff are connected to the local Perkins Consortium and partner on a regular basis on activities, events (such as the large annual Career Fair in Anoka County), data analysis and labor market trends related to guiding and providing in demand career pathway preparation for young adults in our service area and across the state.

Assessments Used

Empowers uses many assessments including the Self Directed Search (SDS), various forms of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), the GED, the Accuplacer and assessments found on My Next Move.org as well ONET.

Career Fair and Hiring Events

Annual career fair held at the local technical college with over 200 employers and 1,000+ student/parent attendees. All schools in the district are invited and many provide buses to the event – held during the school day. For some schools, our team does preparatory sessions to inform the young adults what to expect, what to bring, and how to get the most out of the time with employers and college program faculty.

ACJTC holds three hiring events per month and youth are invited to attend on their own through groups to meet with local employers and hiring personnel.

WDA 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 COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **Recognizing Youth Achievement** – Tree Trust hosts an annual summer celebration to highlight the accomplishments of program participants who work on landscape crews or at individual sites throughout the Dakota County area. Youth crews work at city and county parks on various projects including staircases, retaining walls, benches, bocce ball courts, hockey rinks, wildlife observation decks, and other general landscaping projects. Youth can also work in internships at employer host sites. Tree Trust’s programs include career exploration and other job readiness skill building and youth have an opportunity to earn pay raises for positive performance. Parents, local officials, project

partners, and Youth Committee members are also invited to the celebration event where youth with perfect attendance receive special certificates and several governor’s awards are given to crew members that exemplify strong leadership and teamwork skills. Participants who demonstrate leadership, work productivity and skill development receive a Certificate of Commendation signed by the governor.

- **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 14-24 to enter the workforce. Dakota Electric sponsors and presents 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 and Scott County staff participate in school and community career fairs on an on-going basis. Staff also provide tours at CareerForce locations and work-readiness workshops at both internal and external locations.
 - ▶ Scott County collaborates with Southwest Metro Intermediate School 288 to achieve Child Development Associates (CDA), Nursing Assistants (NA), and OSHA 10 and CPR certifications.
 - ▶ 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 Intermediate School 288, Scott County offered youth needing credits the opportunity to participate in YouthBuild. 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. In Dakota County, Tree Trust and HIRED provided career related services and academic enrichment to youth resulting in school credit.

- **Financial Literacy training for youth participants** – Counselors/programs in both Dakota and Scott County work with youth to 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.
- **Homeless youth and foster care** – Staff in both counties are working closer with homeless youth and those aging out of county-based foster care programs. Dakota County and Scott County serve Link/Passages transition youth in work experience, training, job search and provide support services. Additionally, staff connect with the Housing Unit of Dakota County, CAP Housing Program in Scott County, and alternative schools to reach homeless youth and coordinate services.
- **The Reality Store** – The Dakota County Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) sponsored local Reality Store events. The Reality Store events provided students with Individual Education Plans the opportunity to identify/research specific careers, make independent living decisions, and balance a mock checkbook. Participants had the opportunity to experience first-hand how future career choices could affect their economic well-being. They also participated in a tour of Dakota County Technical College where they learned about various college/ career options and programming. Youth Committee members volunteered to host resource or employer booths and staff store tables.
- **Career Success Program** – The Career Success Program is a Dakota County Community Services collaborative that exposes economically disadvantaged youth and those with significant barriers due to family circumstances and/or involvement in the justice system to job-hunting skills and career options, while offering activities that can be added to resumes and job applications. In the program, youth meet once per week to do career assessments, tour possible employment sites, do a community service project, and master a specific life/employment skill such as First Aid/CPR. The Dakota-Scott Youth Committee has provided funding support for various experiential learning experiences. In addition, Youth Committee members participated in program sessions which provided meaningful

support and a deeper understanding of the youth impacted.

- **Traitify** – The Dakota-Scott WDB, along with support from the Youth Committee, launched Traitify; a personality assessment tool that recommends careers, jobs, and education based on personality and preference data. Traitify is accessible on the Dakota and Scott County websites, providing free unlimited access to all residents of Dakota and Scott County. It is being used (in addition to existing career exploration and counseling) to enhance program services related to career awareness, education, and employment.
- **Dakota-Scott WDB Business and Education Bus Tour** – The Youth Committee partnered with local colleges and Chambers of Commerce to sponsor the Business and Education Bus Tour. The tour aimed to:
 - ▶ Show the impacts and outcomes that education has on businesses;
 - ▶ Provide a forum for educators and administrators to interact and develop an understanding of business needs, future jobs and necessary skills;
 - ▶ Provide a presentation and tour of each business/ college identified;
 - ▶ Provide information relating to jobs, the education/skills needed, future employment needs, hiring expectancy, internship/mentor opportunities (high school and college), etc.

It provided an opportunity for school district staff and community leaders to learn more about potential career paths, jobs and secondary education options that exist within the community. The tour began at Dakota County Technical College and continued to businesses including Rihm Kenworth (transportation), Uponor (manufacturing) and Fairview Ridges (healthcare). Congresswoman Angie Craig, Minnesota 2nd District, also spoke during the event.

WDA 15 – RAMSEY COUNTY WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

SERVICE AREA: Ramsey County

MISSION STATEMENT: *“To address broadly the needs of youth within the Workforce Development Area, with a focus on the elimination of racial inequities, from a principled and strategic perspective, separating policy from program.”*

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

Best Practices:

The Youth Committee has identified four primary strategic goals as part of the current Youth Committee Work plan. These goals include:

1. Encourage the alignment of the educational system with worker industry needs.
2. Advance the availability and quality of workforce counseling for young adults in middle and senior high schools.
3. Support the development of workforce services for out-of-school young adults and homeless youth.
4. Influence local businesses to train and hire young adults.

Saint Paul College Credentialed Customer

Service Class is being provided to current and new youth program participants. This course teaches participants about professionalism, patience, branding/marketing and other work-readiness skills.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Academy, in partnership with the Saint Paul Fire Department and Century College, is being offered to low-income Ramsey County residents (the majority of whom are young adults) who are interested in pursuing a career in healthcare/emergency services. Participants will receive training compensation and support services, to increase success in completing the training and passing the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam.

City of Saint Paul Right Track Partnership is being strengthened through strategic planning. Both WFS and Right Track provide employment supports to local youth and young adults, so additional coordination between providers will ultimately increase the benefits provided to Ramsey County youth and young adults. This included increased focus on serving justice-involved youth and young adults, many of whom experience some of the greatest challenges in locating safe and meaningful employment and education.

The Katherine Project is a new program being developed by WFS, with support of DEED’s Women’s Economic Security Grant, to provide software development training and internships to young women of color, ages 18-24. Ramsey County Youth Committee has provided influence and assistance in the development and promotion of this new program. This program was developed with the expressed intention of intervening in the cycle of disenfranchisement that is widely experienced in Ramsey County’s communities of color, therefore increasing access to equitable opportunities.

Public Sector Career Academy is a new Ramsey County internship program, lead by WFS. In this program, eight young adults, ages 18-24, will be provided with exposure to public sector careers, networking opportunities and work readiness skills, throughout the ten-week timeline. The Career Academy is intentional about enhancing access to county and other public service jobs and supporting young adults as they form professional networking connections that are so critical to enhancing opportunity.

Partnerships with Culturally-Specific Community-Based Organizations are essential in the work to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in employment and education that youth and young adults of color experience in Ramsey County. These partnerships include increased focus on serving the Latinx, American Indian, and East African communities. Through these partnerships, services such as increased staff training/awareness, and development of culturally-specific programs and two of the anticipated outcomes.

The Outreach to Schools initiative, which provides college-aged interns to provide additional support to local high school students with post-graduation planning. Currently, three interns work in three high schools, LEAP High School, Creative Arts High School & Roseville Area High School. WFS is also seeking two additional interns to provide services during the second semester of the school years (January – May). In addition to being financially compensated, the interns also receive professional support from WFS staff through mentoring and development activities.

Ramsey County Youth Works! is a new initiative lead by Ramsey County WFS and the Youth Committee. The goal of this initiative is to “create a campaign of events and activities that bring employers together to highlight how engaging youth in employment/ apprenticeship/internship and volunteer opportunities is of great values to the community and to ask for their participation in opening doors of opportunity for youth to learn, earn and lead in their communities”. This initiative is a collaboration of over a dozen school districts, government agencies, business representatives and community-based organizations.

WDA 16 – WASHINGTON COUNTY WORKFORCE CENTER

SERVICE AREA: Washington County

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

YOUTH COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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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.

WDA 17 – CAREER SOLUTIONS (FORMERLY 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 COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE YOUTH SERVICES AND BEST PRACTICES:

- **Federally-Funded Youth Programs (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 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.
- **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Career Quest)** is a partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Services are provided to students with at least one or more disability as defined on their IEP or 504 plan. The Pre-ETS program provides students the opportunity to learn about their personal interests and strengths and how they relate to career options; determining training and education options after high school, including how to access financial aid; understand employer expectations and effective job search skills; and advocate for themselves and understand how their disability could factor into the workplace, and more. Career Planners will be working with the larger school district in the Stearns and Benton counties but also rural community schools.
- **Youth at Work (YAW)** - Career Solutions partners with District 742 and Sauk Rapids-Rice school districts. The students are placed at work experience sites with employers in Stearns and Benton Counties. Students can receive school credit, a stipend and a competitive wage all while receiving a realistic on-the-job experience. Through YAW, Youth Career Planners partner with District Navigators to ensure students receive needed support to accomplish both employment and educational success.
- **Outreach to Schools** places interns in area high schools to provide career exploration, career fairs, job search assistance, college information and current labor market information to youth and families. These efforts are assisting schools in attaining college and career readiness under the World’s Best Workforce requirements.
- **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. Career Solutions promotes these opportunities to youth who may not be eligible for CareerONE.
 - **Partner for Student Success (PFSS)** is a community initiative begun 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 increasing poverty, immigration status, and increasing expectations for success. Career Solutions is involved in this community initiative.
- Key partners include: Career Solutions, United Way of Central Minnesota, Partner for Student Success, Initiative Foundation, Central Minnesota Community Foundation, Readiness Pipeline, Center for Service Learning & Social Change, University of MN Extension, Child Care Choices, St. Cloud Area School District, and the Greater St. Cloud Area Development Corporation. This team meets regularly to share services, new developments, identify cooperative ventures and new resources, and measure impact through common goals. This is one of eight current community priorities identified in our Central Minnesota area that is getting significant traction.
- 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.
 - **SCRUBS Camp** - is a collaborative effort between the business and industries of the St. Cloud region, St. Cloud Technical & Community College, and St. Cloud State University. This is an engaging, interactive and fun day camp open to any student entering grades 7th-12th in the fall. Students will spend three days exploring a variety of healthcare careers like nursing, laboratory science, social work, alternative therapies, and many others. Students experience these careers through field trips and hands on activities facilitated by healthcare professionals and college faculty. Students will be provided their own set of scrubs to wear and meals are included.
 - **Community Outreach** - Career Solutions staff members speaking fluent Somali and English visit the immigrant La Cruz community to assist with job search options, career exploration, financial literacy and other resource options.
 - **Immigrant Employment and Connections Group** - works to educate employers to overcome real or perceived barriers when hiring the immigrant workforce. The IECG has developed training events and a resource guide for businesses seeking to strengthen their workforce by hiring new Americans, and hosts job fairs specifically tailored to hiring immigrant workers. Special training sessions have been designed and held to ensure immigrant jobseekers have a better understanding of the job-search process.
 - **Inside-Out Connections Coalition** is a community collaborative comprised of area youth serving agencies that support children and families experiencing incarceration. Efforts include promotion of education, reduction of stigma, and identification of community supports.

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