

**Youth Council  
January 7, 2025  
706 N. Victory Drive  
Mankato, MN**

**Those Present:** Jon Nowak, Maria Chace (PICE Intern), Rachelle Pierson (PICE Intern), Heather Anderson, Margy Hendrickson, Amanda Mackie, Jaffer Ahmed Mohamud, Annie Olson, Frank Rutt, Jennifer Steckel, Sara Carrigan, and Sarah Longtin

**Those Virtual:** Eva Dale (PICE Intern), Sue Fager (PACER), Laura Attenberger, Jocelyn Hartman, and Reanna Milbrett

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Jon Nowak called the meeting to order.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Chair Jon Nowak called for the approval of the October meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Frank Rutt and seconded by Margy Hendrickson. The motion carried.

**III. Partners In Career Exploration (PICE) Interns – Maria Chace, Eva Dale, & Rachelle Pierson**

The PICE interns gave an update on their experience with the Partners In Career Exploration program. The interns are placed at Butterfield Odin High School, Tri-City United High School and Waseca Junior/Senior High School. The interns have been meeting one on one with Juniors and Seniors on topics such as career exploration and options after high school, chaperoning career exploration events, and providing career assessments. Some industries of high interest are healthcare, business, and trades. Specific occupations that were mentioned include nurses, doctors, dental assistants and hygienists, welders, carpenters, and electricians. The interns also expressed that there is not a common theme across student decisions. Students have plans to attend 2-year and 4-year colleges, enlist in the military, and enter the workforce.

**IV. Pacer Center – Sue Fager**

Sue Fager of the Pacer Center presented on “How Pacer’s Parent Training and Information Center Supports MN’s Families and Youth.” The organization offers over 30 free programs supporting families of younger children and young adults with disabilities across the state. Among these advocacy services and support programs, Sue highlighted a few. The Simon Technology Center, which provides assistive technology to enhance learning, work, and independence for those with disabilities, and the Tech for Teens program fosters creativity and innovation, connecting youth with each other and technology. The Health Information Center helps families navigate public healthcare and private insurance, while the Housing Information Center is offering upcoming workshops in March. Their National Bullying Prevention website has received 1 million visits. A large part of their work involves IDEA and Section 504, focusing on transition planning. The organization, grown out of a need identified by families, connects them with community resources. Staff members, who are

often family members or parents of those with disabilities, are dedicated to educating families to become better advocates. Additional resources recommended by Sue include the online Senior Linkage Line, Housing Hub, and Disability Hub.

The presentation will be shared with the committee for reference. Judy Moses or Sue Fager can provide additional assistance.

## **V. Updates**

### WIOA and Minnesota Youth Quarterly Reports – Sara Carrigan

Sara Carrigan reviewed a summary of the WIOA Youth and Minnesota Youth programming. A total of 49 WIOA Youth and 300 Minnesota Youth were served. WIOA Youth and Minnesota Youth activities, performance outcomes, and budgets were reviewed.

### Youth Grants Quarterly Reports – Sara Carrigan

Sara Carrigan reviewed a summary of youth grants. The Youth at Work grant is a grant focused on serving BIPOC communities. There have been 126 youth served on this program. The YIP grant is focused on serving individuals who are or have been in out-of-home placements and there have been 33 served on this program. The TANF youth program is a grant to serve children in homes receiving MFIP or young parents receiving MFIP and there have been 33 youth served on this program. The YSS grant is a grant to support youth with disabilities or BIPOC youth to obtain drivers education and there have been 49 served on this program.

### Youth Local Plan – Sara Carrigan

Sara Carrigan reported that the local youth plan is in the process of being updated. Sara plans to reach out to partners for input. If anyone has any suggestions or changes to add to the youth plan, please let Sara Carrigan know. The Youth Local plan will be reviewed at the next Youth Council meeting in March.

### Employment Transition Model Demonstration Grant – Annie Olson & Sara Carrigan

Sara Carrigan shared that our Workforce Development Area (WDA) is one of four areas to take part in the Office of Disability Employment Policy Employment Transition Model Demonstration (ETM) Grant, a federal grant focused on best practices of serving youth with disabilities. Annie Olson is the Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) and will be working closely with this grant. Annie has 30 years of experience serving people with disabilities and is excited to continue serving families.

### Youth Services Update – Margy Hendrickson

Margy Hendrickson reported that in 2024, staff provided services to 346 youth and 151 youth participated in a work experience. Youth at worksites have transitioned to using digital timesheets through Paycom. Currently, new work experiences are paused to stay within budget. However, MVAC staff continue to offer work readiness services and Skills for Success presentations at local high schools. Referrals are still welcome, as youth and young adults can receive career and employment guidance or participate in the Get Started curriculum, which covers budgeting, communication, health and wellness, and community exploration. So far, 92 youth have participated in the online Get Started program, with 54 completing all four weeks of the curriculum. A total of 13.62 academic credits have been

earned, with more expected once fall semester transcripts are entered. The largest challenges identified by staff for youth are mental health and communication, even via text.

#### Youth Directories – Sarah Longtin

Sarah Longtin reviewed the Youth Directory resource. The committee is still working to update the contents of all the Youth Directories as well as reaching out to schools for youth cover art. Volunteers are needed to proofread, update resources, and find local youth to design cover art by the end of January. If interested in joining the committee or helping develop the resource, contact Sara Carrigan.

#### Regional Career Coordinator – Sarah Longtin

Sarah Longtin shared information about the Skills for Success sessions that have been offered in area schools. This quarter (October-December), there were 27 Skills for Success presentations resulting in 775 student services. Know Before You Go Labor Market Information (LMI) has continued to be shared in a variety of ways. Short clips from Career Passport videos and LMI fun facts are posted weekly on social media and Career Corner newsletters are being sent monthly. The planning committees for Crave, Boot Camp, Scrubs Camp, and other career events have begun. Boot Camp will be offered again this spring with MAPS and ABE, with the opportunity to expand in other school districts. Crave will be held on April 8 and Scrubs Camp will be held June 10-12. Career events will take place at TCU on February 6, Career Day at MSU on March 12, New Ulm on March 26, Fairmont on April 9, and Mankato on April 16<sup>th</sup>. In partnership with MVAC staff, we will also be presenting at seven Career Navigator sessions.

#### Perkins & SCC Updates – Laura Attenberger

Laura Attenberger updated that the Career Navigator spring event series starts this Friday, January 10th, and more community partners are needed as presenters. Interested parties should contact Laura. The reallocated funding amount for the 26 consortia is still pending, with an update expected in March. The team is also completing the Perkins application, due May 1, which involves a comprehensive plan and local needs assessment survey for educators, employers, and counselors. Links for these surveys will be shared soon to gather input for improving career and technical education.

Kim Mueller provided a written report that the Minnesota Service Cooperatives are awaiting the legislative biennium budget approval for the CTE Consortium. The anticipated funds will support initiatives like Future Ready CTE Impact Grants, Teacher Externships, and the Statewide FutureForward Expansion. The CTE Teacher Induction Program (TIP) offers multi-year, no-cost support for new CTE teachers, with eight teachers having completed it so far. The CTE Alternative Licensure Programming helps individuals acquire teaching licenses or endorsements at no cost, benefiting those transitioning from industry to teaching. Since 2023, 23 teachers have completed licensure or endorsement, with 14 currently working on it.

## **VI. Other Business**

#### Member Updates

Members of the Youth Council were asked to update contact information on the committee list that will be shared by Sara Carrigan.

**Commented [SL1]:** Laura Attenberger provided an update. The Career Navigator Spring Event series will kick off this Friday, January 10th, and additional community partners are needed to serve as presenters. Interested parties should reach out to Laura. The reallocated funding amount, which will be distributed to each of the 26 consortia, has not been released. They hope to have this amount before making any decisions and will provide an update during the March meeting. Additionally, their team is completing the Perkins application, which is due May 1. This involves developing and submitting an entire plan with many narratives, determining priorities using needs assessment. The Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment includes three different surveys offered for various roles: educators, employers, and counselors. Links for these surveys will be sent out in the following weeks. The goal is to gather input to improve career and technical education in the area.

Kim Mueller sent an update on behalf of the Perkins and the South Central Service Cooperative. The Minnesota Service Cooperatives are still awaiting the next legislative biennium budget approval to confirm statewide funding for the CTE Consortium. The anticipated funds will help our region continue to provide several initiatives. These include Future Ready CTE Impact Grants, which foster school district and business partnerships to help students explore careers, and Teacher Externships, a new model in our region for this summer. Additionally, the Statewide FutureForward Expansion is in its early stages in South Central MN, with employers beginning to sign up for this free platform. This system allows regional businesses to identify how they can connect with secondary schools through guest speakers, tours, internships, mock interviews, mentorship, volunteer opportunities, and more. The CTE Teacher Induction Program (TIP) offers multi-year, no-cost support for new CTE teachers, many of whom have not gone through a traditional education model. So far, eight teachers have completed the program. The CTE Alternative Licensure Programming helps individuals acquire a CTE teaching license or endorsement in areas such as Health Science, Manufacturing, Transportation Careers, Manufacturing Careers, Work-Based Learning, and more, at no cost. This program is particularly beneficial for individuals transitioning from industry to a school setting to teach. Since 2023, 23 teachers have completed a licensure or endorsement in our region, with 14 teachers currently working on licensure this year alone.

Frank Rutt, a Juvenile Probation Agent with Blue Earth County Community Corrections, shared that he continues to work with students who are truant or delinquent. His current caseload includes students from Maple River, JWP, St. Clair, the FUTURES program, and private schools in Blue Earth County. Overall, the Blue Earth County Diversion & Prevention Services are assisting 230 students, with 100 of them at Mankato East High School. He noted that the biggest challenges he is seeing in youth are mental health and chemical use starting at a young age.

Jaffer Ahmed Mohamud, the Office Manager at MN Council of Churches, shared that their office continues to work with all ages in a variety of programs to connect families with resources in the area. Current partners in the area include Adult Basic Education, District 77, Nicollet County, and Blue Earth County.

Jon Nowak, Program Coordinator for the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters, expressed excitement about the upcoming major projects following a slow year. Potential projects in the area include new hotels in downtown Mankato, the rebuilding of Armstrong Hall at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and an addition to MTU Onsite Energy. He also mentioned that high school students interested in apprenticeships should reach out to Brian Raines for more information.

Heather Anderson, High School Equivalency (HSE) Specialist with Adult Basic Education, mentioned that the GED program has been highly successful, especially with the hyflex opportunity. If learners start now, they could obtain their GED by May 29<sup>th</sup> and walk at graduation.

Amanda Mackie, Executive Director at Minnesota Valley Action Council, shared that both the youth and senior programs are full, and participation is high.

Jennifer Steckel, Employment Specialist with MRCI, shared that they continue to offer a variety of programs, including Track to Success and Bridge. MRCI is currently navigating adjustments due to changes in the VRS pay structure and availability.

#### 2025 Meetings

- March 11, 2025
- May 13, 2025
- October 14, 2025

The next meeting will be held March 11, 2025. The meeting adjourned.