

**Youth Council
October 8, 2024
706 N. Victory Drive
Mankato, MN**

Those Present: Jon Nowak, Amanda Mackie, Jennifer Steckel, Laura Attenberger, Heather Anderson, Caleb Watson, Andrea Montemayor, Sara Carrigan, and Sarah Longtin

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 May meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Heather Anderson and seconded by Amanda Mackie. The motion carried.

III. The Arch Minnesota – Reanna Milbrett

Reanna reviewed the mission and values of The Arch Minnesota and encouraged visiting the website. She mentioned that Arch staff are spread across the state in five regional areas, with Reanna serving southwest Minnesota. The programs offered include a unique peer-to-peer mentor program, information and assistance with a team of advocates, online resources and training, housing assessment services through DHS for those on medical assistance, self-advocacy events and workshops, various newsletters, and volunteer and intern opportunities with stipends for high school and post-secondary students. She also highlighted Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The PowerPoint with links will be shared for reference.

IV. Discussion Question: What challenges do BIPOC youth face in pursuing career opportunities in our community, and what specific support or resources can help them succeed?

Sara Carrigan discussed a youth networking event with MVAC, including a panel and lunch, aimed at increasing networks for the target population, as this has been identified as a barrier.

Heather Anderson emphasized transportation as a barrier and the lack of readily available information to youth and families.

Caleb Watson highlighted engagement through internships or WBL for career opportunities, perseverance through college, and transportation barriers due to inadequate bus routes in Mankato. He also mentioned that parents/guardians often lack awareness.

Jon Nowak pointed out that information is not widely spread or available to help navigate the system.

Jennifer Steckel mentioned that speakers in special education classes provide additional information to specific populations, with support coming from word of mouth and teachers as resources.

Andrea Montemayor shared a new program within MET, Inc., serving 14–24-year-olds with work experience and stipends, with a liaison at the district or high school level.

The group discussed that Virtual Reality (VR) simulators may aid in career exploration and training programs due to its less intimidating nature with practice before performing the task.

V. Updates

WIOA and Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) Quarterly Reports:

Sara Carrigan reviewed a summary of youth programs and noted the deduction in WIOA youth funding of 17.2%. The WIOA program had a goal of serving 50 and 45 have been served to this point. The MYP SFY24 had a goal of serving 400 youth and served 372 youth. WIOA Youth and Minnesota Youth activities, performance outcomes, and budgets were reviewed.

Youth Grants Quarterly Reports:

Sara Carrigan reviewed a summary of youth grants. Youth at Work (YAW) grant is focused on serving BIPOC communities and offers worksite supervisors training on diversity. The goal is to serve 112 participants. So far, 137 YAW participants have been served and 36 youth have exited. The YIP grant is focused on serving individuals who are or have been in out of home placements and there have been 24 served on this program. The TANF youth program serves youth in homes receiving MFIP or young parents receiving MFIP and there have been 33 youth served on this program. The Youth Support Services grant had a goal to serve 14, and so far, 53 participants have been served.

Equitable Transition Model:

Sara Carrigan shared that our Workforce Development Area (WDA) is part of the Office of Disability Employment Policy Equitable Transition Model Demonstration (ETM) Grant, a federal grant focused on best practices of serving youth with disabilities. More information will be provided when it becomes available.

Youth Program Policies:

Sara Carrigan shared that the South Central WorkForce Council has approved the revised Regional and Local Youth Policies: Provision of Training Services, Youth Support Services, Youth Stipends, and Youth Incentives.

Youth Services Update – Amanda Mackie:

Amanda Mackie reported that MVAC is currently serving 92 youth in work experience and 120 youth were served during the summer. Two interns are working in youth programs, one of whom has been hired permanently. Participants have gained experience in various fields, including healthcare, childcare, retail, IT, nonprofits, health and fitness, schools, car dealerships, somatology, arts, food

industry, manufacturing, and an animal sanctuary. MVAC wrapped up summer events with in-person Get Started classes in July and August, which received positive feedback from youth and parents. Get Started is still offered online, with about 25 participants, since the last meeting. A YIP event included four youth and three staff participating in an escape room, lunch, and activities. This year, Skills for Success presentations have started monthly for the New Ulm River Bend Education District. There is significant interest from 14- and 15-year-olds in gaining work experience, making up about a quarter of the caseload. Finding worksites for these youth is challenging, but efforts are ongoing.

Regional Career Coordinator – Sarah Longtin:

Sarah shared that the Tour of Manufacturing took place on October 3 and 5. We estimate that 650 students from 19 local schools participated in addition to the public tours being offered at 17 sites. Sarah shared that Skills for Success sessions have taken place in Blue Earth, Madelia, Mankato (East), New Ulm, and Waseca. 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. Labor Market Infographics in Somali were adopted from a regional partner. These infographics have statewide data, unlike the southwest/south central wage data on the English and Spanish versions. Construct Tomorrow will be taking place in Mankato on Tuesday, November 12th.

Perkins & South Central College (SCC) Updates:

Laura Attenberger reported that the Perkins application was accepted, and they were awarded \$6,000 less than the previous year. The annual Perkins performance report is being composed. Key highlights include the Career Navigator event inviting 26 districts and 3,000 9th grade students, implementing the health science mobile lab and serving 322 8th graders in five districts utilizing over 50 volunteers, and four districts using the Big-Ideas trailer. Last year, a total of 150 students from 11 districts participated in High-Step Academy or IT Academy, and 120 students are enrolled in academies this fall. Many secondary and post-secondary educators attended professional development conferences, both national and regional. Some funding was reserved for an OSHA 10 pilot and training devices for Advanced Agriculture Technicians.

Laura provided South Central College (SCC) updates. The President, Annette Parker, is retiring at the end of June, with a successor to be named in April or May. George Taylor, the new Dean of Business and Industry, comes to the institution from Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU). SCC continues its 2+2 program partnerships with MSU, including a new Bachelor of Applied Science in Agronomy. This month, there will be Education Nights hosted for Spanish and Somali communities with information about higher education. Additionally, SCC will provide PSEO information sessions. SCC is excited to host high schools with industry partners for Ag Day in both the fall and spring. They are establishing a respiratory

therapy program, with the first cohort starting in fall 2025. Enrollment at SCC is up by 5%, with eight full programs, including LPN.

Youth Directories:

The committee discussed updating Youth Directories, which haven't been revised for three years due to cost increases. The South Central WorkForce Council may have identified funding for this year. Feedback was received from educators that both physical and virtual copies are utilized. Volunteers are needed to proofread, update resources, and find local youth to design cover art by December. If interested in joining the committee or helping develop the resource, contact Sara Carrigan.

VI. Other Business

Member Updates:

Sara Carrigan shared that the Partners In Career Exploration (PICE) internship program has three interns that will be located at Butterfield-Odin High School, Tri-City United High School, and Waseca Junior/Senior High School.

Heather Anderson reported that Mankato Adult Basic Education's GED program is nearly full.

Jon Nowak shared that construction projects are steady to slow. This year, specific projects have been affected by the election. Projects on hold include Mayo in Rochester, MTU Onsite Energy, Walmart Distribution Center, and more. Jon reported that five students from area schools anticipated their participation in signing day, but four were put on hold due to limited work. There are 600 students registered at their apprenticeship training center. The Union Construction Trades are excited for this year's Boot Camp with MAPS in April and May.

Tentative Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on January 7, 2025, at 1:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned.