

South Central Career Pathways
January 10, 2025

Those Present: Heather Gleason, Nate Warden, Mary Shumski, Jed Highum, Sonja Bowan, Renae Wolf, LeRoy Kiecker, Sara Carrigan, Marcia Highum, Mary Kate Lewis-Piroso, Ariana Boelter, Kim Mueller, Betty Blaisdell, Jennifer Johnson and John Lawton.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Heather Gleason called the meeting to order.

II. Industry Updates

Renae Wolf with Mayo Health System shared that the onboarding for the new bed tower went well, using a phase hiring approach. Renae indicated that Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN's) and Medical Assistants are harder to fill positions. Due to the lack of LPN's and Medical Assistants, Mayo has hired unlicensed staff to help with specific tasks. Renae reported that Mayo has a MN Dual Pipeline grant to help train surgical technicians and LPN's.

III. Quarterly and Expenditure Reports

Heather Gleason shared quarterly reports for On-Ramp, Bridge, and Individualized Training Pathways (ITP). The quarterly reports reflect a snapshot of where we are in the grant, through December 31, 2024.

On-Ramp: Services in the On-Ramp grant include work readiness training, On-Ramp training, Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Navigator services with the goal of assisting students with gaining or increasing their employment or moving on to the Bridge program. Currently, 42 individuals are being served in the On-Ramp grant, with a goal of 68 participants for the region, and South Central has served 26 of them. In South Central, all participants are or have been in training to gain On-Ramp and work readiness certificates. Thirty-eight On-Ramp certifications have been obtained. Six On-Ramp participants have moved into Bridge programming.

Bridge: The Bridge grant provides the opportunity for individuals to learn about career pathways in healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, or construction while working on their academic and employability skills through contextualized learning. The goal is for participants to earn an industry specific credential and move into employment or advance training. The plan is to serve 96 individuals in the region, and so far, 99 participants have been served regionally, including 42 from South Central. Thirty-five participants have entered training and 23 have earned credentials. Fourteen South Central participants have exited the program successfully.

Individualized Training Pathways (ITP): ITP assists individuals that are college ready to start a program in healthcare, skilled trades, information technology, or advance manufacturing. Services include post-secondary training, experiential learning, and navigator services. The goal is to serve 76 individuals in the region and 66 individuals have served. Forty participants are from South Central with 18 currently attending training.

Heather Gleason shared expenditures through November 30, 2024, for the On-Ramp, Bridge, and ITP grants. Heather Gleason asked partners to review their budgets and to notify her if there are any concerns with spending the funds.

IV. Additional Grants

Women Economic Security Act (WESA): The WESA grant is an additional grant that can support our local career pathways programming. WESA supports women pursuing non-traditional careers. This regional grant has a goal of serving 38 participants, with 9 participants currently enrolled. If you know any women pursuing non-traditional careers, please refer them to CareerForce.

Drive for Five: The Drive for Five grant mirrors services provided in the ITP program and supports specific occupations. The grant ends June 30, 2025. The goal for the region is to serve 70 individuals and in South Central we have served 8 individuals.

New Americans in Long Term Care Workforce Grant: This is a grant opportunity to support New Americans in Long Term Care and is a partnership with Blue Earth County Employment Services, MN Council of Churches, ABE and the South Central WorkForce Council. The grant would include a curriculum for long term care training including pre-nursing assistant and career exploration with online and virtual reality components. Curriculum is available in Spanish and Somali. This grant will serve immigrants or children of an immigrants. The goal is to serve 100 individuals.

V. South Central Career Pathway Updates

On-Ramp: Jed Highum indicated that there had been four enrollments in the last two weeks for On-Ramp. ABE will be offering a CDL program focusing on a class B license. The spring Construction Trades Boot Camp session is another opportunity for On-Ramp students.

Bridge: Jed shared that ten students completed the Healthcare Bridge class this fall. Students are moving along in their career pathway to nursing assistant, medical technicians, dental assistant, phlebotomy, LPN or pre-social work. Seven students completed the Fall Manufacturing Bridge course. Manufacturing bridge graduates are moving into training for mechatronics, welding, auto services and heating ventilation and air conditioning.

Individualized Training Pathways (ITP): Several bridge students have advanced to ITP programming. Jed reported they continue to screen individuals for the ITP, Drive for 5 and WIOA Adult program.

South Central College (SCC): Sonja Bowan provided an update regarding the TESA test requirement, which is still required at this time. However, she anticipates a different assessment will be utilized in fall. Sonja reported that the college would like to create a healthcare success coach which would assist students that are moving from the bridge class. Sonja hopes to have this position in place by summer and it would be funded through the Title 3 grant. Sonja indicated that the college is looking into offering a Healthcare professional education certification which would help those looking at pre-medical careers.

VI. Next Meeting:

April 11, 2025, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.