

Final Data: State Fiscal Year 2014 Youth Competitive Grants
South Central Workforce Council/Minnesota Valley Action Council
(Summer 2013)

Participant Summary

Total	63	Hispanic/Latino:	29
Male:	34	American Indian:	0
Female:	29	Asian/Pacific Islander:	2
		Black/African American	32
14-15:	2	White:	0
16-17:	35		
18:	12		
19-21:	13		
22-24:	1		

GOAL 1: Provide work experience to youth who are economically disadvantaged or at-risk, ages 14 through 24

The South Central’s “Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It.” Program served youth ages 16-24 from communities of color in the nine county area. About 51% were Black or African American, 46% were Hispanic and 3% were Asian. Youth were placed in worksites where they worked an average of 15 hours per week earning minimum wage for up to 12 weeks. While youth are working at the worksites, employment counselors provided on-site monitoring on a regular basis to identify what the youth is doing well and support their growth. At the worksite, youth acquire positive work habits, new job skills, customer service skills, teamwork skills and develop relationships with positive, caring adults. A total of 42 youth participated in a work experience.

GOAL 2: Promote mastery of work-readiness competencies and 21st Century skills as demonstrated through workplace portfolios and other assessments

We utilized our Youth Competency System to define, measure, and document the mastery of work readiness skills. The SC WorkForce Council established these competencies working with local employers and youth service providers to identify standards and skill sets that youth would need to be “competent” in the areas of career exploration, job search techniques, positive work habits, and daily living skills. Under these four broad areas are 15 skill sets. The assessment determines if youth has identified a career goal and gathered labor market information supporting their career interest. In job search techniques, youth must demonstrate that they know how to complete a job application, resume, cover/thank you letter and a job interview. Youth must maintain successful employment and exhibit positive work habits including punctuality, attendance, positive attitude, appearance, interpersonal relations, and task completion. Youth must demonstrate daily living skills such as developing a budget, opening a bank account, getting their driver’s license or accessing public transportation, finding an apartment, etc. Youth must also know how to access community resources.

Evaluation information was also gathered through worksite supervisor evaluations on youth's bi-weekly timesheets and worksite monitoring visits by staff. On youth's bi-weekly timesheets, supervisors evaluate youth performance on attendance, punctuality, communication, cooperation, work quality and quantity. At worksite monitoring visits, supervisors evaluate youth on the following categories: attendance, punctuality, appearance, initiative, work quality, communication, teamwork and problem solving.

GOAL 3: Promote skill acquisition (academic and work readiness) through project based instruction

Youth participated in a variety of project-based activities that began in the summer and continued throughout the year. Youth attended workshops on job seeking and job keeping, career exploration, labor market information including demand occupations, value of post-secondary education, entrepreneurial opportunities, goal setting, connections to community resources, life skills training and financial fitness training.

An example of a project-based life skills training activity focused on meal planning. Many families receive free or reduced lunches during the school year but during the summer may have limited or no access to meals. Youth participated in an activity titled "Shopping on a Budget", where youth utilized local store flyers and developed a meal plan that allowed for leftovers for youth to take to their worksite for lunch. They also practiced food safety by learning about appropriate food containers and storage temperature.

GOAL 4: Increase exposure to in-demand jobs important to regional economies

Youth participated in field trips that began in the summer and continued throughout the year including: tours of local businesses to gain hands on exposure to potential careers in demand occupations and industries in the area; visits to local colleges and universities to learn about post-secondary options and visits to local WorkForce Centers to ensure that all youth are aware of the services available to connect to education and employment opportunities throughout their lifetime. Youth also participated in the annual Tour of Manufacturing event where local manufacturers opened their doors for tours and provided career opportunities at their business.

GOAL 5: Provide high-quality work sites and overall participant and employer satisfaction

Youth were placed at quality worksites that fit their interests and could accommodate their cultural beliefs. For example, there are many cultures that prohibit people from touching pork. In that case, we avoided a worksite that involves contact with pork, work with the employer to assign duties that don't involve contact with pork or develop other worksite accommodations.

Examples of worksites included:

- Ace Hardware
- Golden Heart Childcare Center
- Maverick Bookstore

- Mayo Clinic
- Q Computers
- Autumn Grace
- Mankato Public Schools
- Jerry's Auto Body Shop
- Nicollet County Social Services

Worksite supervisors served as mentors to youth and received a mentoring training and curriculum designed to engage youth in conversation about their career goals. Worksite mentors reinforced the importance of completing school and model life skills and positive work habits.

GOAL 6: Connect to and strengthen other key educational initiatives and systems in the area

This project was developed from the input of current youth participants, parents and representatives from agencies that serve youth from communities of color. This project strengthened our relationship with the following organizations and initiatives:

- **African Family and Education Center** which works with a range of issues for immigrants and refugees like housing, education, social services, workplace issues, and more by bridging cultural and language barriers.
- **Greater Mankato Diversity Council** which addresses changing demographics by providing diversity education as a catalyst for social and economic success. They work with students in K-12 as well as adults on the theme of respect for regardless of differences.
- **Life-Work Planning Center** which serves young Latinas through a weekly after school program.
- **MRCI WorkSource** which is the provider of public assistance employment programs in Blue Earth Co.
- **MN Council of Churches Refugee Services** provides specialized services for refugees and asylees to assist them on the path to self-sufficiency and support them as they work towards achieving their dreams.
- **South Central Service Cooperative** partnership helps us to develop strategies and collaborate programs and services to meet the needs of youth in this demographic.

GOAL 7: Leverage other non-project funds

Other resources that supported this project through August 31, 2014 included:

\$105,885	In-kind match for employers' time for supervision at the worksite
\$550.78	WIA Youth
\$18,498.69	MN Youth
\$961.50	Youth Intervention Program
<u>\$95.00</u>	Disability Employment Initiative
\$125,990.97	Total Match

GOAL 8: Other South Central program goals

- *Engage families in work readiness activities and the development of youth's career plan.*

Youth from communities of color have unique needs. When there is a language barrier it can be very difficult for families. As youth assimilate to the United States culture and learn the English language, it can often cause a power struggle between youth and parents. Youth are often asked to interpret for their parents which can be a stressful responsibility and ethical dilemma for youth. It is also difficult for parents to maintain authority when they are unable to communicate and rely on what the youth is translating for them. Even when no language barrier is present, it can be difficult for youth that are stuck between two cultures. They are trying to fit in the United States culture while trying to remain connected to their culture of origin.

It was important for the overall success of youth that their parents were involved in their career development. We worked with parents to improve their son or daughter's everyday decision making skills and help parents feel empowered to support their son or daughter's growth. This enhanced collaboration addressed the gap that can occur between youth and parents. In addition, many of the topics covered in the group activities were also beneficial to parents and they were invited to participate in workshops on job seeking and job keeping, career exploration, labor market information including demand occupations, value of post-secondary education, entrepreneurial opportunities, goal setting, connections to community resources, life skills training and financial fitness training.

- *Provide cultural awareness to worksite supervisors.*

The Greater Mankato Diversity Council provided two training sessions to worksite supervisors on cultural awareness and sensitivity (see photos attached). Because many worksites involved in the program are spread out in the nine county area, we will also utilize YouTube videos developed by the Greater Mankato Diversity Council to address cultural awareness in the workplace that staff can share on a laptop at the worksite.

- *Provide role models to inspire youth to "Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It."*

In March, MVAC held an event for youth participants and their families. It included a dinner and short program with motivational speakers. The first speaker, Tracy Stokes-Hernandez from South Central College spoke of her struggles to complete college after becoming a teen parent. The second speaker, Oscar Gonzalez, from Minnesota State University, spoke of his experience completing college after everyone told him he would never go to school with his low GPA. Lastly, the final speaker, Chris Scarver spoke of his struggles growing up without his father who was in prison and how basketball helped him. Youth received t-shirts that had the quote "Masterpiece in Progress". Each youth received an envelope from their youth counselor with 3-5 strengths they saw in that youth. It was a successful and motivating evening.

**YOUTH COMPETITIVE GRANT DATA SUMMARY
SFY 2014 Annual Report Data (Cumulative Through August 31, 2014)**

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION		
Grantee: Minnesota Valley Action Council Fiscal Agent for South Central WorkForce Council	Contact: Heather Gleason	
Phone #: 507-345-2418	E-mail Address: hgleason@workforcecouncil.org	
TOTAL SERVED – GROUP SERVICES		26
<p>The number provided above is to include all persons who participate in grant funded group activity (or activities). For example, the number is to include the number of persons involved in job fairs or the number of family members of a participant who also participate and benefit from the granted funded activity. In the case of an activity led by a youth participant, the participant is to be counted in both the group services and individual services categories.</p>		
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS SERVED – INDIVIDUAL SERVICES		
Total Individual Participants Served		63
Gender	A. Male	34
	B. Female	29
Age	A. 14 – 15	2
	B. 16 – 17	35
	C. 18	12
	D. 19 – 21	13
	E. 22 – 24	1
Ethnicity / Race	A. Hispanic/Latino	29
	B. American Indian or Alaska Native	0
	C. Asian/Pacific Islander	2
	D. Black or African American	32
	E. White	0
Education	A. 8 th grade and under	1
	B. 9 th Grade – 12 th Grade	44

	C. High School graduate or equivalent	16
	D. Post-Secondary Education	2
Other Demographics	A. Limited English Proficient	20
	B. Youth From Families Receiving Public Assistance	58
	C. Foster Youth	6
	D. Youth with a Disability	11
	E. High School Drop-Out	3
	F. Youth Offender	10
	G. Pregnant or Parenting Youth	5
	H. Basic Skills Deficient	52
	I. Homeless or Runaway Youth	2
	J. Not Employed at Program Enrollment	59
	K. Veteran	0
PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE		
	A. Received Education or Job Training Activities	20
	B. Received Work Experience Activities	42
	C. Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities	55
	D. Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities	63
	E. Received Mentoring Activities	42
	F. Received Support Services	57
INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE		
	A. Attained Work Readiness or Education Goals	11
	B. Received Academic Credit or Service Learning Credit	1
	C. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Dropout – Returned to School	6
	D. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, Military, Job Search or Employment	12
	E. Completion Rate	84% (16 of 19)

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	
A. Number of participants rating experience as "Excellent"	0
B. Number of participants rating experience as "Very Good"	0
C. Number of participants rating experience as "Average"	0
D. Number of participants rating experience as "Below Average"	0
E. Number of participants rating experience as "Poor"	0
F. Total Number of Surveys Completed	0