

Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Youth Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 20, 2025
3:00-4:00 PM

Members Present

Tom Aasheim
Nardos Tesfalidet
Aalayha Traub

Members Absent

Tami Cybulski-EA
Breanna Galuska-EA
Jennnifer Germain
Bryan Kuzel-EA
Camila Mercado-Michelli
Abdi Mohamed
Ginny Nayman-Tonn-EA
Sheri Riemers

Staff/Guests Present

Kristi Cobbs, Workforce Solutions
Chari Gill, Workforce Solutions
Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Bradley Mahr, Workforce Solutions
Becky Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
Catrice O'Neal, Workforce Solutions
Matt Saari, Workforce Solutions
Longkee Vang, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Mahr called the meeting to order at 3:05pm. Aasheim read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

Approve January Minutes

Motion (Aasheim/Tesfalidet) to approve the January 16, 2025, minutes as presented. Motion carried by chat vote.

Approve PY25/SFY26 Youth Plan

Mahr stated the Youth Plan that is blended with other funding in serving the youth. He shared the plan highlights for the April WIB meeting which includes career exploration website; expanded programs and partnerships; and outreach to schools' enhancements.

Milbrandt shared further details as to the April WIB meeting and the tour being offered at the GP Youth Center.

Mahr will include details in the follow up email

Motion (Aasheim/Tesfalidet) to approve the PY25/SFY26 Youth Plan as presented. Motion carried by chat vote.

Review and Select Youth Workforce Champion Award Winners

Mahr reminded everyone of the rebranding of the Vern Vick Award to the Youth Workforce Champion Awards for people who have made a significant impact in supporting young people. He reviewed the award timelines stating there are three nominees for the Rising Star Award and two nominees for the Legacy Award that the Committee will be voting on today. After discussion of the nominees, the Committee members voted on Stephany Aguirre Lopez to receive the Rising Star Award and Donnell Bratton to receive the Legacy Award. There were many great candidates. The award winners will be asked to join the April 3 WIB meeting for the award presentation, which will be in person at the GAP Youth Center location.

Mahr will reach out to Lopez and Bratton for their attendance at the WIB meeting.

Youth Team Updates

Youth Team shared the following and links will be provided in the follow up email.

- Construct Tomorrow Recap: This is a partnership that the County has with Construct Tomorrow, who provides exploration, career exploration and immersive activities in the State Fairgrounds. There were over 800 students from 34 high schools that attended this event at the North End Event Center at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds along with 15 trade unions.
- DOL-Youth Systems Building-Youth Works! Advisory Board: The second cohort for the YouthWorks! Academy is starting in a few days. This is the Youth Advisory Outreach Board through the DOL Youth Systems Bill coalition. The Academy is an orientation to introduce young people to Youth Works! Ecosystem and how our boards and advisories work in the bigger picture. The registration is still open so if Committee members have anyone in mind, please contact Gill. The target outreach is for 18-26 young leaders from all backgrounds.

- Youth Job and Resource Fair: The team continues to recruit employers, partners and community parties that can provide resources and opportunities for young people, including Right Track. This event will be held Saturday, May 3, from 10a-Noon near the Ramsey County Service Center at Maplewood Mall for youth ages 14-16, who are looking for summer jobs, mentor program and volunteer opportunities.
- Level Up: Level Up fka Launchpad is in partnership with the St. Paul Area Chamber and Minneapolis Regional Chamber in connecting graduating Seniors and young adult with employment opportunities. The event is being held April 24 at the St. Paul Eastside YMCA at 9a to 1:30p. A list of employers is being developed so teachers, who are being recruited to bring students to this event, will be able to prep students with interview questions, resume support, etc., in the hope that employers might do an in-person interview for immediate opportunities.
- 2025 National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) Annual Forum: This is an annual forum that builds the capacity of youth-serving organizations and advocates on issues related to opportunity youth, vulnerable youth. The Ramsey County YouthWorks! Team will be participating and presenting at this year's forum being held May 12-14 in Minneapolis. A shout out to Tesfalidet who will be sharing in a workshop about all of the school partnerships and happenings. Gill and Cobbs will be presenting on Power Within Us and Driver's License Academy.

Committee Member Updates/Other Business

- CareerForce Relocation: Milbrandt shared that the CareerForce recently relocated from the Fairview and University location into the County-owned Metro Square building in downtown Saint Paul. This relocation was done to align career force services with the County Service Center that's also located in this building, which allows people who are coming in for County services, an easier access to workforce services. During the first week, a small open house for the partners was held. These partners are part of the memorandum of understanding. A grand opening is being planned for committee members, county leaders and others in the community to come in and see the space.
- Political and Legislative Landscape: Milbrandt shared that the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards is putting forward a bill that is having a hearing in the Senate next week. The bill is asking for almost \$1 million in Minnesota Youth Program funding for the next biennium 2025-2026. The WIB signed on to a letter of support and is doing some advocacy around support for that bill. Mahr shared that a few young people alumni of the Youth Young Adult program will be testifying at the Capitol in support of this bill.
- Right Track Update: Tesfalidet shared that Right Track has hit its highest application numbers ever seen. There has also been an increase in participation in all the activities and an increase in wanting to work. Employer partners are still be sought so if any committee member know of folks who are interested in partnering for YJ1 or YJ2, please share the information. Information will be provided in follow up email and also in the WIB newsletter and YouthWorks! Newsletter.
- Reminder of the April 3 WIB meeting will be in the follow up email.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 PM.

Next Meeting: May 15, 2025, 3:00-4:00pm via Zoom