

**Minnesota's Workforce:
Reaching New Heights
Together**

**RMCEP Annual
Report 2026**



Return on Investment Summary Report WDA 2

Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Programs

Return on Investment to Taxpayers for each \$1 Spent

PROGRAM:

**Overall Return on
Investment (includes all
programs listed
below).....\$1.86**

**Minnesota Family
Investment Program
(MFIP).....\$1.63**

**Diversions Work
Program (DWP).....\$4.76**

**Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program
(SNAP).....\$1.91**

**Federal Dislocated Worker
Program.....\$4.66**

**State Dislocated Worker
Program.....\$1.24**

Shade Store Project..\$2.25

Drive for Five.....\$2.87

P2P Next Step.....\$1.61



**From the desk of
Tina Jaster, Executive Director**



A Message from RMCEP

This past year was marked by innovation, collaboration, and measurable impact. Through strategic workforce initiatives, industry partnerships, and targeted investments in talent development, RMCEP helped strengthen workforce stability for both job seekers and employers throughout NW and West Central Minnesota. The accomplishments detailed in this report reflect our continued commitment to building a strong and resilient regional economy.

Starting strong with the Drive for Five initiative

This project continued to be a transformative workforce development strategy across Rural Minnesota CEP's 19-county region. Through our partnership with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce, we focused on preparing individuals for family-sustaining careers in high-demand industry sectors including healthcare, manufacturing, labor, and technology. The program provided participants with career planning, credential-based training, supportive services, work-based learning opportunities, and direct connections to employers facing critical workforce shortages.

Equally important is our unwavering commitment to fiscal integrity and accountability. As stewards of public funds, we recognize the responsibility entrusted to us by our communities, funding partners, and stakeholders. Consistently clean audits and successful monitoring visits continue to demonstrate the strength of our financial management practices, organizational stability, and commitment to transparency. These achievements reflect the dedication of our staff, board members, and partners who ensure that resources are managed responsibly and directed toward meaningful outcomes.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in this important work. Great things are happening at RMCEP that are impacting the communities we live and work in; it is an exciting time in workforce! Together, we are building workforce stability, economic opportunity, and stronger communities.

Working for and with you,
Tina Jaster and the RMCEP Team

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Year Ending June 30, 2026

In fiscal year 2025, we enrolled just shy of 4,000 individuals, succeeding in several key performance outcomes and continuing our tradition of impactful, people-centered workforce development.

From our earliest days to today, RMCEP has remained committed to creating opportunities, building skills, and helping individuals achieve meaningful employment. Our success is a reflection of the dedication of our staff, the strength of our partnerships, and the determination of those we serve.

	WIOA Adult	WIOA Dislocated Worker	WIOA Youth
Employment Q2			
Goal	84.00%	82.00%	74.50%
Actual	77.88%	84.26%	87.37%
Employment Q4			
Goal	82.00%	84.00%	74.90%
Actual	79.81%	82.51%	87.88%
Credential			
Goal	85.00%	83.10%	62.00%
Actual	78.57%	78.33%	68.66%
Median Earnings			
Goal	\$9,658	\$11,401	\$5,800
Actual	\$11,240	\$15,247	\$6,677

Employment Q2 = The percentage of participants employed during the 2nd quarter after exit.

Employment Q4 = The percentage of participants employed during the 4th quarter after exit.
Note: For Youth Employment outcomes, participating in education or training activities during performance measurement quarters also count besides employment.

Credential = The number of participants who attain a credential within one year of exit.

Median Earnings = The median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit.

MINNESOTA FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE of Counties Served by RMCEP

Self-Support Index

- Indicates those that are working 30 hours or more or off MFIP three years after enrollment.

93% of the counties we serve are meeting or exceeding Self Support Index.



Success through Drive for Five!

"Dear RMCEP,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the grants and assistance I have received through your program to pursue my Registered Nurse (RN) education. Your support has been instrumental in helping me focus on my studies and reduce the financial burden that often comes with higher education.

This program has been truly amazing, and I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to dedicate more of my time and energy to my coursework and clinical experiences. The ability to work fewer hours while in school has allowed me to fully immerse myself in my studies, leading to a deeper understanding of nursing principles and practices. I am confident that this will make me a more competent and compassionate nurse in the future. The Team at RMCEP was incredible. They were always there for me when I had questions and always celebrated the wins. This program has really helped me, and I find that it will help many others in the future.

Thank you once again for your generosity and commitment to supporting aspiring nurses like me. Your belief in my potential has inspired me to work even harder and strive for excellence in my studies. I am excited to embark on my nursing career and make a positive impact on the lives of others, thanks to your invaluable support.

Sincerely, Alivia O."



Strengthening Minnesota's Workforce

Rural Minnesota CEP's first round of the *Drive for Five* program has been one of great successes. The impact has been remarkable, with 35 individuals completing training through this grant. Most participants have entered careers in CDL, transportation, healthcare, and manufacturing. Outcomes include:

- Participants gaining employment with starting wages from \$18.50 per hour for machine operating to \$40 per hour for Registered Nursing (RN);
- More than 83% now earn \$25 or more per hour after completing their training;
- 27 Minnesota businesses filling in-demand positions with well-qualified candidates;
- Average wage at placement is \$25.76.

Beyond the numbers, *Drive for Five* has created new opportunities for Minnesota residents to gain valuable credentials, overcome barriers, and build stable careers that strengthen both their families and local communities. It has also provided Minnesota businesses with much-needed workers who have been trained well thanks to the partnerships between RMCEP Job Counselors and grant-approved training providers. Due to the program's success and proven outcomes, RMCEP is thrilled to be awarded additional funding so that *Drive for Five* services can continue for two more years and extend these life-changing opportunities to even more individuals and businesses across our region.

Building on the momentum of *Drive for Five*, RMCEP continues to expand innovative workforce solutions through several additional special Minnesota grant initiatives designed to meet the evolving needs of our regional economy. *Growing Careers* is focused on developing the next generation of agricultural professionals by connecting participants to hands-on training, industry recognized credentials, mentorship, and career exploration opportunities within one of Minnesota's most vital industries. As workforce demands continue to shift, this program will help ensure a strong pipeline of skilled talent for agricultural employers while creating meaningful career pathways for participants.



In addition, RMCEP has launched its *CanTrain* grant to prepare Minnesotans for careers in the state's emerging cannabis industry. Participants can obtain a Cannabis Associate certificate as foundational training and become specialist certified for work as cultivators, retail and sales, product development, compliance and medical cannabis. RMCEP is also continuing its *Pathways to Prosperity* grant, which provides training focused on the in-demand industries of healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, wholesale distribution, agriculture and education.



These special grant programs demonstrate RMCEP's ongoing dedication to Workforce innovation, economic mobility, and developing the skilled workforce needed to support Minnesota's future. RMCEP programs help participants gain the skills and experience needed to successfully enter or advance within these critical industries with every dollar invested returning jobs, wages, and growth.

Services are provided through CareerForce locations that serve the Alexandria, Bemidji, Brainerd, Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Little Falls, Moorhead, and Wadena regions. In addition, Mobile Workforce services are offered in the surrounding communities.

For the office location nearest you, please go to WWW.RMCEP.COM

Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer Program Provider.

Upon request, this document will be made available in an alternate form.

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