

Program/Initiative Title: Mobile Workforce Services  
WDA Name: RMCEP

**Overview describing the innovative practice**

**Redesigning service methodologies, strategies and systems to meet the needs of rural northern Minnesota.**

In 2017, RMCEP initiated an innovative pilot project to offer mobile workforce services to job seekers in Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Hubbard and Lake of the Woods counties.

RMCEP staff in Bemidji began providing mobile career services in communities throughout the region in February. Services delivered on a mobile basis by RMCEP staff include workshops and one on one assistance in resume development, interviewing, completing applications, performing an online job search using MinnesotaWorks.net and other online search engines, using social media to conduct a job search and offering these on a regularly scheduled rotation throughout the region. The idea is to be the help that is needed when it is needed, customizing the content and information to the needs of the customer.

RMCEP team members also provide referrals to community resources, conduct program application intakes, and provide case management services to enrolled clients in the communities where they live.

**Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)**

The office's services had been concentrated in Bemidji and Beltrami County, but RMCEP wasn't reaching the most rural populations. The region is beyond rural — most people are remote. Although the population in any one community is small doesn't mean they should be ignored. Travel can be a barrier for some people. In the past, people had to travel to the workforce center to receive services. With this method, the workforce services come to them.

Job counselors travel with laptops, portable printers and scanners. With these mobile tools, they assist job seekers in completing practical tasks such as job searches, online applications, resume and cover letter writing. They also help people explore career options and improve interview skills.

RMCEP works in conjunction with different sites in different towns, from tribal colleges to libraries and county buildings. The idea is to secure a consistent space with repeatability.

**Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)**

The pilot is still in its infant stage but communities have been very welcoming. The first phase is establishing a regular routine with set locations. We have gained traction as we go. If we're not getting customer visits where we're located, we'll look at whether we're deployed in right places.

In the next phase, RMCEP plans to collaborate with other workforce partners to do joint activities and increase outreach to businesses.

**Identification of those involved, including collaborators**

As of June, 2017 Mobile Team is engaged in activities in these locations:

Red Lake Tribal College:

Cass Lake: Every Monday and Thursday mornings – Retention modules are delivered in a workshop format from 10 to noon with workforce services available after the workshop at the Tribal College.

Walker: Staff provide regular services every Thursday at the Cass County Health and Human Services Building in Walker.

Regular services in Lake of the Woods each Wednesday – with expanded Workforce Service at the Library in Baudette 1 - 2 times per month.

Services in Clearwater county include Clearbrook at the Clearwaters Life Center 1 time per month, and Bagley to the Lighthouse 2 times per month.

Park Rapids is currently 3 days per week, officing in the County Human Services Department, which has improved access to county staff, communication and provides immediate services to the clients. The mobile strategy for Adult and Dislocated Workers as well as workshops has been rolled out at the Park Rapids Library

Services to Bemidji local residents are taking place in the new "hub" location. There are computer carrels for staff assisted and basic career services such as career exploration, NCRC, Career Ready 101 etc.

Future Bemidji location as staff time provides for at the County Human Services office one time per month for one on one meetings, career exploration services and other needs with local residents.

Youth Services are rolled into the regular schedule and include: Bagley, Clearbrook, Gonvick, Northome Keliher, Blackduck, Baudette, Redby, Ponema, Walker, Laporte, Leech Lake, YouthBuild, Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College, Bi-Cap Head Start and Boys & Girls Club, Headwaters Science Center, Bemidji Fire Department and Great River Rescue, Bemidji Public Library, and Evergreen Youth Services.

### **Leveraging/alignment of outside resources**

The partnership with public locations throughout the region, libraries and public buildings has leveraged local resources to expand the services available to citizens throughout the vast NW region of Minnesota.

### **Ideas for replication/lessons learned**

Ideally, any RMCEP staff member at an outreach location will have the basic knowledge of all program areas to make referrals, provide applicant pre-screening, and provide elementary client services (such as support services) to clients of all programs.

Cross training allows for more robust services and ensures knowledgeable staff and customer interaction. Mentoring and observation is a key method for cross training. It is important for MFIP staff to have a basic understanding of the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs to provide information, referrals and conduct pre-screening. This maximizes time and travel to remote areas through program knowledge across disciplines. Conversely, a non MFIP staff member in an outreach office has the basic knowledge needed to research a client support service request, communicate with the MFIP Counselor or Team Leader and assist an MFIP client. This strategy maximizes the team centered service delivery concept, and incorporates it into the mobile service strategy.