

## Young Adult Career Navigation Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

### Overview describing the innovative practice

Career Navigation program is designed to meet the needs of young parents' ages 18 and 19 who need assistance navigating the career landscape and moving towards economic stability. This includes: Career exploration, college readiness, career training and education, ongoing skills development, financial assistance and grant navigation, college enrollment assistance, life skills, work experience opportunities, support services and resources. Career Navigation program is a collaboration between Ramsey County Workforce Solutions (WFS), Ramsey County Public Health (PHN) and HIRED. All programs are supported and funded by the Ramsey County Workforce Solutions public assistance programs. Public Health serves participants ages 14-19 who are receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) services and who choose the high school or GED option versus the work option; HIRED young adult serves participants ages 18-22 who are receiving MFIP services and completed their High School diploma, GED, or choose the work option. During the participant's last semester of high school, the participant is referred to the career navigation program, which is a collaboration between WFS, PHN and HIRED. During this time period, the participant works with a career navigator to prepare for further education and employment. The career navigator works with a cohort of 20-25 participants and focuses on helping them to get post-secondary education and explore careers through work experience placements, internships and volunteering. One of the key principles to serving the full family is the use of a career navigator, who focuses on the services for the parent while the PHN focuses on the services for the child through a comprehensive PHN home visiting program. ,

There are a few essential components to the program:

- All services are performed in a cohort model
- Off-site meetings are conducted on college campuses and at community sites
- Career navigator offers career exploration assessments, workshops, and activities associated with assisting pre-graduates to identify career interests
- Work Experience placements are offered to get hands on experiences in specific careers
- Education support is provided with focus on a specific, chosen career or career pathway
- All services are performed through the use of Motivational interviewing and coaching techniques
- All services are performed through the lens of understanding the executive function of the human brain
- The main focus is to engage participants in educational activities suitable to their interests and aspiration

### Jobseeker impact (i.e.: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

The program was implemented in January 2016 using a cohort model. There were 50 participants who were served by the career navigation program. The earlier outcomes indicated that almost all of the participants enrolled into short or long term educational programs following a career pathway model of their own choice. All of the participants have created their own independent career plan using a SMART goals development framework. The majority of the participants participated in the work experience internship program which exposed them to different career opportunities and provided them with a better understanding of their own career choice.

### Employer/Community impact (i.e.: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

Career navigation services focus on providing essential skills and career opportunities for the young adults who are the future of our community. The program creates more stable families which in return results in more stable communities.

Employers have increased access to a prepared workforce with a high quotient of executive and "soft" skills, industry recognized credentials in high demand jobs, and who have goals for career advancement, creating a more stable workforce for employers.

#### Identification of those involved, including collaborators

Collaborator	Role
Ramsey County Workforce Solutions	Administrator, convener, trainer, policy and tool developer, monitor, idea generator
Ramsey Count Health & Wellness	Program development and evaluation
HIRED	Career Navigators , collaborator, feedback and input into service design and effectiveness
Public Health	Nurses, collaborator, feedback and input, into service design and effectiveness
Families receiving supports from career navigation	Goal setters, decision makers, feedback and input into service design and effectiveness

#### Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

All of the available resources are utilized to create a continuum of services for the young adult parents and children. Career navigators collaborate with other workforce development programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services or Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), other community based organizations and culturally specific organizations in order to create one solid plan of action for the individual that supports with family stability and economic independence.

#### Ideas for replication/lessons learned

1. All tools developed can be replicated for any young adult population or workforce program.
2. All activities and workshops can be replicated for any young adult population
3. The evaluation of the program started in late 2016 and will continue until mid-2018, but lessons learned will be shared throughout the process.