

Program/Initiative Title: **Equipped to Work**
WDA Name: Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.

Overview describing the innovative practice

Some folks who may not be eligible for employment and training programs just need a little helping hand to boost them toward success. How can we help them?

United Way of Douglas and Pope Counties and Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. have partnered to help people obtain the necessary clothing and equipment to obtain employment and advance in careers in Douglas & Pope Counties resulting in financial stability. This program provides supportive service funding as an additional resource for individuals who are not eligible for other services but are still in need of support. Through this program we can help address the shortage of qualified workers in the industries of Douglas & Pope counties through supporting qualified employees by ensuring that they are equipped to work.

This funding provides the helping hand some individuals need to receive the necessary clothing and equipment such as boots, uniforms, tools, etc. required by the employer that a potential employee may not be able to afford. The funds provided make it possible for the applicant applying for a position to be successful in the position if hired by an employer.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

Feedback gained from our counselors and the jobseekers who have taken advantage of this partnership effort have been able to accept employment or maintain employment. This, in turn, launches them toward self-sufficiency.

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

By providing funds to meet this need, this program has been identified as one of United Way's Community Impact Programs. Recognition as one of our Community Impact Programs would highlight the work being done to support financial stability for people in Douglas & Pope Counties while increasing the number of individuals who are equipped to work for local employers.

Employers are able to find qualified workers who are work-ready and have the tools and equipment to begin employment immediately.

By assisting with a small helping hand, productivity and economies are strengthened in these communities through the power of work.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

United Way of Douglas and Pope Counties, Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

This project is funded directly through a West Central Initiative Workforce Solution Grant. SNAP staff funding is leveraged through RMCEP. Partnership is key to the success of the initiative.

Ideas for replication/lessons learned

Our hope would be that through recognition as one of our Community Impact Programs we would raise awareness and financial support to continue to offer the program beyond the pilot year when funding is granted.