

Bridges to Employment Program

St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services is partnering with Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency Employment and Adult Education services; Community Action Duluth Employment Services; and Duluth ABE to provide a continuum of services for MFIP participants who self-identify as African American or American Indian, but who are not a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. The continuum of services includes:

- A customized employment plan: an employment plan built around the specific needs of the individual job seeker and developed in partnership with that job seeker, responding to her or his priorities and goals.
- Intensive case management: small caseloads that allow the employment counselor to provide personal attention with adequate time and with resources to respond to the personal challenges that can impede getting or keeping a job.
- A skilled employment counselor: those skills would include African American or American Indian cultural competency, the development and use of employment-related information, placement and assessment skills, strong community relationships and counseling skills that support the ability to establish a trusting, open and productive relationship with each job seeker.
- A “mixed-approach” strategy that encourages the employment counselor to work with the job seeker and determine on an individual basis whether the key strategy should be a path to sustainable employment by addressing viable employment strategies or by assessing educational/vocational/training needs.
- Adult Education: providing literacy skills contextualized in either preparation for entering post-secondary or increasing skills for improving employment, along with financial and digital literacy training.

In addition to the service continuum for the participants, we are also 1) connecting with and developing employment opportunities with employers; 2) connecting with and developing community relationships with local Tribal entities and local African American support agencies. This strategy focuses on the particular institutional barriers that create the racial and ethnic disparities that affect individual/family sustained self-sufficiency.

AEOA anticipates serving up to 40 individuals each program year in Northern St. Louis County. Community Action Duluth will serve up to 80 each program year in Duluth and surrounding areas.