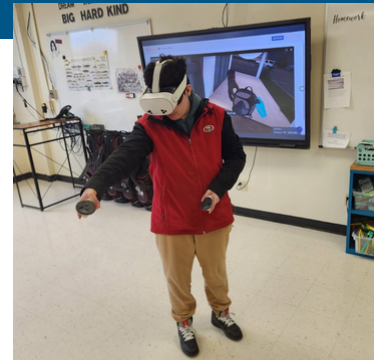


YOUTH CAREER CONNECTORS ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



JULY 1, 2025 -
JUNE 30, 2026

*Strengthening Southwest Minnesota's
Workforce Through Career & Connected
Learning and Work-Based Learning*



WHAT IS A YOUTH CAREER CONNECTOR?

Southwest Minnesota's Youth Career Connectors (YCC) serve as vital intermediaries between schools, employers, and students. By providing customized career advising services and work-based learning opportunities, YCC helps students discover career pathways, gain hands-on experience, and connect with local businesses — ultimately strengthening Southwest Minnesota's future workforce.

THE REGIONAL CHALLENGE

A study from The Center for Rural Policy and Development revealed that only 25% of high school graduates in Southwest Minnesota work in a meaningful way in the region six years after graduation. With critical talent shortages in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, transportation, and skilled trades, it is essential to engage students early in CTE and work-based learning opportunities.

Yet, many schools lack the capacity to organize these opportunities on their own. The student-to-school counselor ratio is 541 to 1, the third highest in the country. Career counselors are being asked to do more with less. That's where Youth Career Connectors come in — creating seamless connections between classrooms and industries.

Work-based learning and internships are proven retention and talent development strategies for rural communities.



**YOUTH CAREER
CONNECTORS**

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL



← *learn more from these reports*

STUDENTS
RECEIVED
YCC
SERVICES

SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVED

LOCAL BUSINESS PARTNERS

246

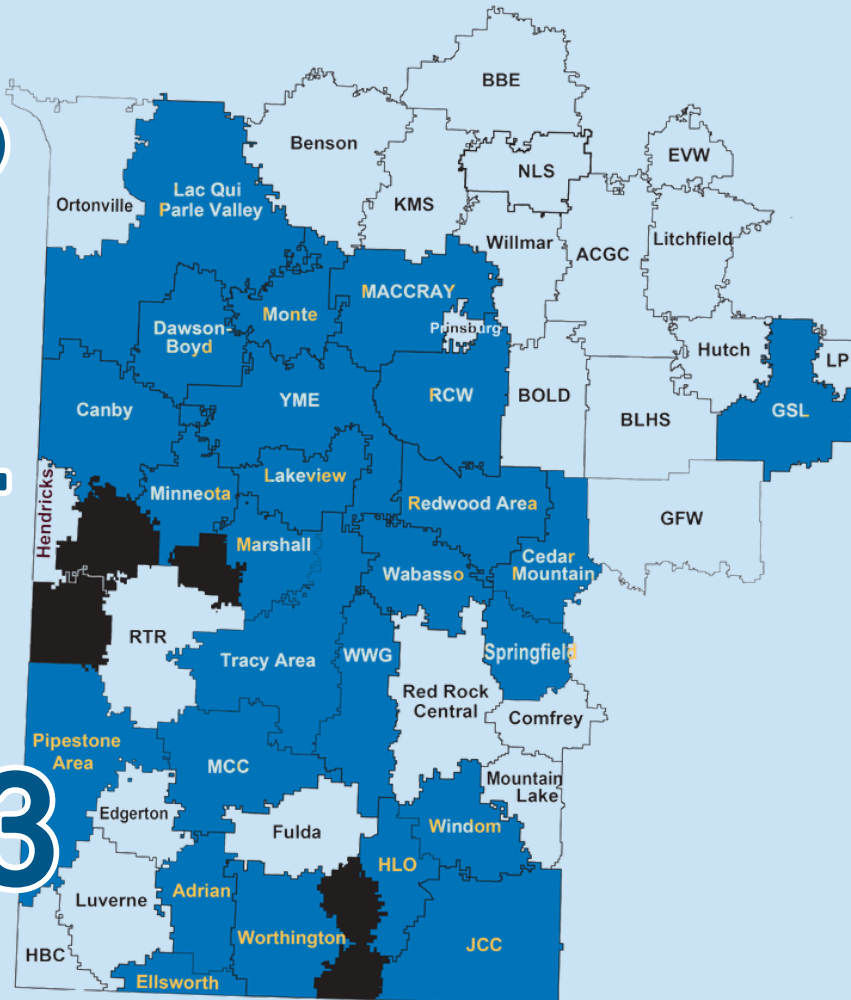


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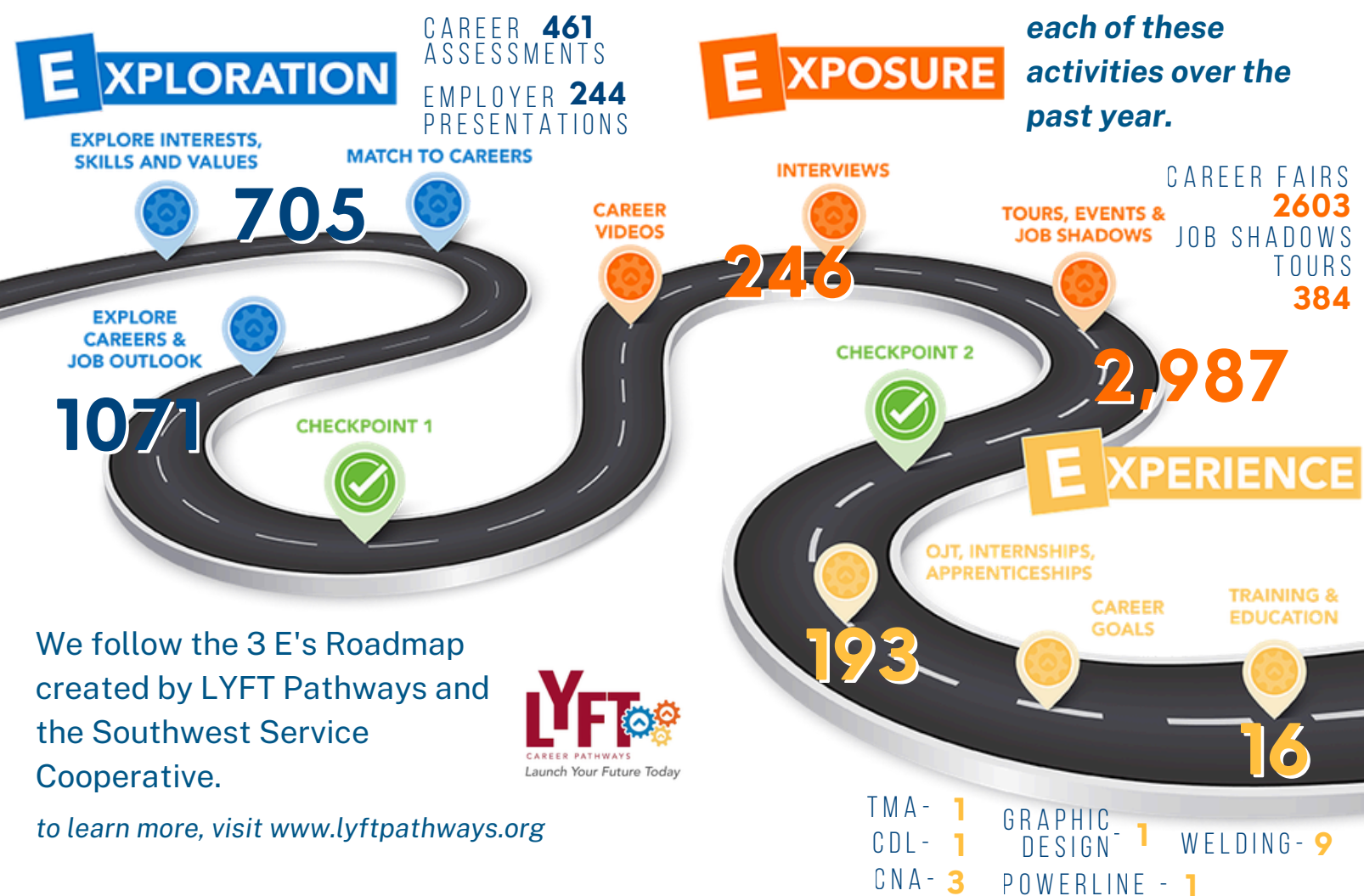
2,603

STUDENTS ATTENDING CAREER FAIRS



3 E'S ROADMAP - LYFT PATHWAYS

The numbers on the map indicate the number of students we worked with in each of these activities over the past year.



We follow the 3 E's Roadmap created by LYFT Pathways and the Southwest Service Cooperative.

to learn more, visit www.lyftpathways.org

EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

- Skills/Interest Assessments
- Employability Skills Class
- Interpersonal Skills Presentations
- Life Skills Event
- Summer Transitions Tours

EXPOSURE ACTIVITIES

- Tour of Manufacturing
- Senior Career Day
- Business Tour Day
- Job Shadows
- Breaking Traditions
- Career Fairs
- Tour of Health Care

EXPERIENCE ACTIVITIES

- Summer Internship Program
- Work-Based Learning Classes
- Internships
- Career Pathways Classes
- Paid Work Experience

CAREER FAIRS

We coordinated five career fairs throughout Southwest Minnesota, giving students direct access to local employers.



Success Story: Jasmin

Jasmin completed and passed her CNA course, earning an industry-recognized credential while still in high school. Shortly afterward, she secured part-time employment as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Maple Lawn in Fulda, Minnesota.

JOB SHADOWS

Tailored job shadows help students explore real workplaces based on their YouScience career assessments, a tool identifying aptitude-based career matches. The Westbrook Walnut Grove Job Shadow Day is a standout annual event, providing job shadow experiences for the entire 11th grade in a single day.



CAREER ASSESSMENTS

*This year, **461 students** completed a YouScience career assessment, helping them identify personal aptitudes and career interests. This data helps guide job shadows, mock interviews, work-based learning placements, and future career interests.*

YOUTH INTERNSHIPS AND PAID WORK EXPERIENCES

Youth Career Connectors actively support work-based learning placements and internships. By collaborating with local employers and schools, we build bridges into high-demand occupations like welding, manufacturing, healthcare, and diesel mechanics.



BRING YOUR A GAME

Youth Career Connectors teach the engaging “Bring Your ‘A’ Game” curriculum to students. The curriculum focuses on building seven foundational workplace skills, including Attendance, Appearance, Attitude, Ambition, Accountability, Acceptance, and Appreciation.

SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

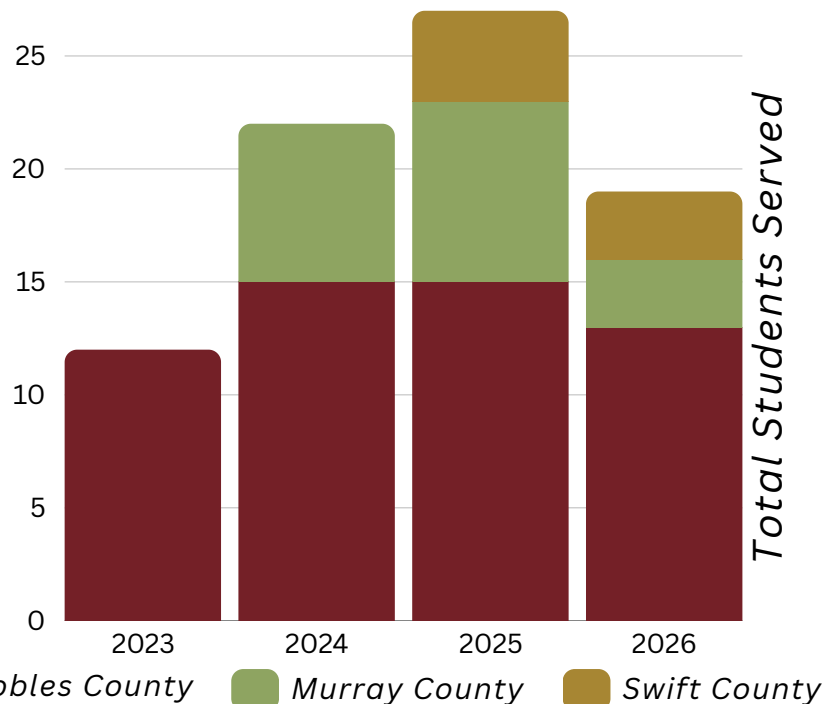
Now in its fourth year, our paid summer internship program offers college students meaningful work experience in their field. It operates in Nobles, Swift, and Murray counties.



"I could very well see myself working in a bank in the future, and I would not have known that without this internship," Andrew shared. "I am very thankful to PIC for giving me this opportunity and experience."



"This internship has been a wonderful experience that will help me in my future career." ~ Paige



198

STUDENTS

BREAKING TRADITIONS EVENTS

In partnership with Minnesota West Community and Technical College, this event series introduces students to careers they might not have otherwise considered, especially in non-traditional fields for their gender. Held at six MN West campuses annually.



120

STUDENTS

LIFE SKILLS DAYS

Day-long workshops focused on career readiness and essential life skills like time management, work ethic, and personal finance. Hosted at MN West and Ridgewater College campuses.

246

STUDENTS

MOCK INTERVIEWS

After career readiness workshops on interpersonal skills, resume writing, and job search basics, students participate in mock interviews with real employers, simulating hiring experiences and receiving actionable feedback.



TOUR OF MANUFACTURING

As part of Manufacturing Month, YCC collaborates with the Minnesota River Valley CTE Collaborative and local businesses to provide behind-the-scenes manufacturing tours, highlighting high-skill, high-wage careers in robotics, machining, and advanced manufacturing. An additional tour takes place with Jackson, Windom, and Heron Lake-Okabena school districts in October.



Success Story: Ethan

Today, Ethan is thriving in his role at Maynards and is proud to be part of his community's workforce. His family is grateful for the support of the PIC program, which helped guide him on this path. With meaningful opportunities and the right encouragement, Ethan has shown that he can achieve his goals and build a bright future.

TOUR OF HEALTHCARE CAREERS

This annual tour introduces students to career opportunities in healthcare through facility tours and hands-on activities in radiology, surgery, lab, and EMS, followed by healthcare program overviews at Minnesota West – Granite Falls.



OUR BUSINESS, COMMUNITY, AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS

211

BUSINESS
PARTNERS

27

SCHOOL
DISTRICTS

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



FINANCIAL PARTNERS



EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE
FOUNDATION



Preparing
Students for
Tomorrow.



COUNTRYSIDE
PUBLIC HEALTH

Use the QR code to the right to
see the complete list of business
and community partners for the
past year.



SCAN HERE



The Robert and Helen
Remick Charitable
Foundation Trust

OUR EVENTS

SEPT 2025

- Mock Interviews- Windom
- Career Assessments- Jackson/ECHO/Murray County Central
- First Impression/Interview Tips – Worthington

OCT 2025

- Mock Interviews- Worthington
- Interviewing Skills- Jackson
- Career Assessments- Minneota
- Tour of Manufacturing- Granite Falls Area & Worthington/Jackson Area
- Business Panel- Murray County Central
- Resume Workshop- Minneota
- Guest Speaker- Worthington/ECHO
- Breaking Traditions- Granite Falls/Canby/Worthington/Jackson/Pipestone/Luverne
- Bring Your A Game (Employability Skills)- Pipestone/Lac qui Parle Valley
- Job Shadows- Worthington/Murray County Medical Center

NOV 2025

- Major Madness- Worthington/Marshall
- Mock Interviews- Worthington
- LifeSkills- Worthington/Willmar
- Career Assessments- Cedar Mountain/Montevideo
- Bring Your A Game- Windom
- Business Panel- Windom

DEC 2025

- Job Shadows- Worthington
- Wabasso Career Exploration Event
- Resume Presentation- Tracy Milry Balaton
- YME Senior Day

JAN 2026

- Guest Speaker- Windom
- Mock Interviews- Worthington/MACCRA
- YMIC Business Tour Day
- Career Assessments- MACCRA
- Job Shadows- Murray County Central

FEB 2026

- Tour of Healthcare
- Worthington Career Fair

MARCH 2026

- MRVCTEC Career Fair at MACCRA
- Windom Career Fair
- Career Assessments- Canby

APRIL 2026

- Mock Interviews- Wabasso
- Lac qui Parle Valley Career Fair
- Information Interviews- Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley

MAY 2026

- Minneota Career Fair
- Mock Interviews- Cedar Mountain/MACCRA

JUNE 2026

- Freshman Transition Tours- Worthington



Interested in participating or learning more?

CONTACT MARIA PETERS AT MPETERS@SWMNPIC.ORG | 507-829-8168

WEBSITE

www.swmnpic.org

SOCIAL MEDIA



LOCATIONS

Marshall CareerForce

Lyon County Government Center
607 West Main Street, Marshall, MN 56258
Phone: 507-476-4040 or 1-800-818-9295

Montevideo CareerForce

202 North 1st Street, Suite 100
Montevideo, MN 56265
Phone: 320-269-5561 or 1-800-422-1346

Worthington CareerForce

Nobles County Government Center
318 9th Street, P.O. Box 816
Worthington, MN 56187
Phone: 507-295-5020

