



CAREER PATHWAYS

*Launch Your Future Today*

## LYFT 2.3 Funded Projects

Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) Career Pathways believes potential is limitless when we know our strengths. Through the alignment of industry and education, we create relevant and engaging opportunities for students to discover, pursue, and achieve the career path that best fits them.

LYFT Pathways is a rural career and technical education (CTE) pathway initiative with the purpose of rebuilding Career and Technical Education (CTE) in southwest and west central Minnesota. Launched in 2018 with a legislative grant secured by the Southwest West Central (SWWC) Service Cooperative and its partners. Since then, LYFT Pathways continues to be supported through a state-wide Rural Career and Technical Education (CTE) Consortium Grant, which was passed by the Minnesota Legislature.

LYFT Career Pathways has funded over 90 projects. More than 20,000 students in southwest and west central Minnesota were impacted by these projects, and 50 of the projects were new CTE courses. An article titled “High School Career and Technical Education as a Workforce Retention Strategy” published in June of 2022 examines the role that high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) can play in building a future pipeline of workers. The evidence presented in the article says “that investments in high school CTE can help sustain regional labor force growth and thus mitigate workforce shortages in Greater Minnesota. Students who participate in CTE more intensively become employed locally at higher rates than other students; CTE programming can contribute to workforce retention by connecting students to local postsecondary institutions and local employers”.

As of recent, this article is now being fully supported by a report released by the Minnesota Center for Rural Policy and Development titled “The Journey to meaningful workforce participation among graduates in Southwest Minnesota” that says “the choices students make in high school and that paths they take after high school can predictably guide them to specific states of meaningful workforce participation later. If their paths and planning for after high school involve programs with regional ties such as attending a college in the region or engaging in career and technical education (CTE) programs, they are significantly more likely to work in the region”.

In December of 2023, the LYFT Pathways Advisory Committee announced a new round of funding (2.3) for innovative CTE projects in southwest and west central Minnesota to begin as soon as November 1, 2023. The goal of LYFT Pathways funds is for every student in the region, grades 7-12 to gain marketable skills leading to further education and careers that match our region’s labor market needs. The CTE project criteria include 1) support and engage students to gain greater exposure to careers and/or build work skills through innovative hands-on learning, 2) include the collaboration of at least one school and one or more businesses or industry-related partners, and 3) align to local/regional career opportunities.



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The maximum amount of funding that could be requested was \$15,000. LYFT Career Pathways received a total of 9 proposals, totaling \$91,000. This grant opportunity estimated that \$80,000 was available to fund 4-5 proposals. Selection and notification of successful applicants was made on Friday, December 15, 2023.

We are thrilled to announce the following applicants whose partnerships have been selected and awarded LYFT Pathways Innovation Grant funding: Yellow Medicine East & Renville County West (\$15,000), Hills Beaver Creek High School (\$14,000), Ortonville High School (\$7,500), Luverne High School (\$12,000), Marshall Career and Technical Institute (\$15,000), and Jackson County Central (\$15,000).

For more information, contact Eriann Faris, CTE Project Coordinator at SWWC.

