

# Application for Funding – Cover Page

## Applicant Agency

Business Name	Mountain-Plains Youth Services Coalition (dba Youthworks)	Street Address Including City, State, and ZIP Code	217 West Rosser Avenue Bismarck, ND 58501
Contact Person	Mark Heinert	Title	Assistant Executive Director
Phone	701-255-6909	Email	mheinert@youthworksnd.org
Authorized Representative	Melanie Heitkamp	Title	Executive Director
Phone	701-255-6909	Email	mheitkamp@youthworksnd.org
Federal Employer Tax Id #	46-0345922	Unique Entity Identifier #	KCSJVSNHZZL5
Dates of Active Registration in System for Award Management	12/29/2025		

Targeted Intervention(s) to be Implemented	Mentoring, assessment, peer-to-peer
Total Amount of Funding Request	186,728
Willing to Accept Less Funding (Y/N)	Yes, but would change scope of services
Evidenced-Based Program/Services (Y/N)	Yes
Name and Source of Evidenced-Based Program/Services	Following OJJDP recommended best practices for mentoring
School(s) or School District to be Served	CREA schools located within 25 miles of Bismarck and Minot
Estimated Number of Youth to be Served	150
Estimated Number of Minority Youth to be Served	75

Signature

  
Signature of the Person Submitting this Form

Name Melanie Heitkamp  
Name of the Person Submitting this Form (print)

Date of Signature 5/15/25

## **Connected Communities: Strengthening Youth Engagement through Community and School-Based Mentoring and Assessment**

### **a. Description of the Project**

Connected Communities is an initiative led by Youthworks, with support from the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) and local school districts in Bismarck, Minot, and the surrounding area. Connected Communities will work to address student behavioral challenges through mentoring, assessment, and school-community collaboration. This initiative aligns with the goals of the North Dakota Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group (SAG) to reduce disciplinary actions and support student engagement.

This school-based intervention uses a mentoring model and whole-student assessments to support disengaged or at-risk youth. It incorporates evidence-based practices to:

1. Identify students disconnected from school or demonstrating non-adaptive behavior;
2. Conduct whole-student assessments at Youthworks;
3. Pair youth with trained mentors to provide school and community-based support;
4. Train students as peer mentors to promote leadership and support networks

Youthworks will directly serve schools within a 25-mile radius of its offices in Bismarck and Minot, benefiting both urban and rural districts. Approximately 150 students are expected to receive services annually.

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### **b. Project Planning, Design and Implementation**

#### **Collaboration to Date and Next Steps**

Youthworks and the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) have laid a strong foundation for regional collaboration by engaging school superintendents to discuss student engagement needs and align on shared goals. These efforts have resulted in letters of support from Bismarck, Mandan, Minot, Glenburn, and Wilton Public Schools, signaling broad commitment to the initiative.

This early outreach has fostered partnerships with district leaders and initiated planning to tailor strategies that meet both urban and rural needs. These relationships position Youthworks to support locally informed, student-centered solutions across the region.

#### **Planned Activities for Summer 2025**

In Summer 2025, Youthworks will conduct targeted follow-up conversations with districts that have opted into the project. These sessions will help move from interest to implementation through a series of workshops focused on:

- *Confirming Participating Districts:* Districts will formally commit to participating, with opportunities to clarify expectations, timelines, and available supports.
- *Defining Student Engagement Goals:* District teams will identify specific, measurable goals aligned with local data and priorities.
- *Developing Tailored Action Plans:* Each district will co-create a customized implementation plan with Youthworks, outlining strategies, roles, and evaluation methods.

During this same timeframe, Youthworks and CREA will continue to host informational sessions with surrounding rural school districts to expand regional participation. By the end of Summer 2025, Youthworks and participating districts will be equipped with actionable plans to launch their initiatives in the 2025–26 school year.

**Each participating school will:**

- Appoint a School Champion as liaison
- Promote school-wide buy-in
- Prioritize use of Connected Communities prior to disciplinary action

**Implementation Timeline:**

- *June 2025:* District-level planning meetings
- *September 2025:* School Champions identified
- *September 2025:* Services begin for the 2025-2026 school year
- *January 2026:* First quarterly stakeholder meeting
- *Summers 2026 & 2027:* Peer mentor trainings

Youthworks will coordinate mentoring, assessments, and family engagement, while CREA provides support with professional development and data analysis. Together, these entities ensure scalable and sustainable implementation.

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**c. Design and Implementation of Core Interventions**

*1. Identifying Students:* Schools will refer students who are struggling with chronic absenteeism or behavioral issues within the school.

*2. Whole-Student Assessments:* Youthworks will conduct a bio/psycho/social assessment and administer the MAYSI-2 Screening for mental health and behavioral concerns and the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), an assessment of internal and external developmental assets. These assessments will inform the service offered by Youthworks and help develop a customized school reentry and mentoring plan.

*3. Mentoring and Peer Mentorship:* Trained mentors will provide regular mentorship support. Program coordinators will provide family engagement support, including psychoeducation and family mediation options. Finally, Youthworks will complete a Peer

Power training each summer, promoting youth's skills and training them to become certified peer mentors, fostering school-based leadership and mutual support.

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#### **d. Capabilities and Competencies**

Youthworks brings nearly 40 years of experience in delivering high-impact, youth-focused programming across North Dakota. The organization has a proven track record in providing mentoring, diversion, crisis intervention, youth leadership development, and family support services to young people at risk of disconnection from school and community. This long-standing commitment reflects deep organizational knowledge of adolescent development, trauma-informed care, and relationship-based intervention models.

With established offices in both Bismarck and Minot, Youthworks is strategically positioned to serve area schools with consistent, regionally embedded support. Its staff are experienced in partnering with schools, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems to offer wraparound services that meet the complex needs of youth and their families.

The project will be led by a qualified and multidisciplinary team, including:

- Program Manager – oversee implementation, partnerships, and overall project quality
- Project Coordinators – deliver direct services to students and families, including assessment, counseling, case management, and goal planning
- Mentors – lead relationship-based interventions and school connections
- Lead Trainer – train peer mentors during summer Peer Power Mentorship trainings

This staffing structure ensures a comprehensive and coordinated approach that integrates school-based engagement strategies with the individualized supports Youthworks is known for. With strong community partnerships and decades of experience serving youth, Youthworks is well-equipped to lead this initiative with fidelity, flexibility, and measurable impact.

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#### **d. Plan for Collecting Performance Data and Continuous Quality Improvement**

The Connected Communities initiative will implement a data-informed practices to ensure programming is meeting the needs of the youth served and partner school districts. These practices will be built on real-time data collection, feedback loops, and responsive program adjustments that foster long-term student success and system accountability.

## **Performance Measurement Goals**

The initiative is committed to advancing three key outcomes:

- Increase in behavioral and emotional engagement by 10%
- Improvement in student attendance by 10%
- Enhancement in family engagement by 25%

These targets were selected based on existing disparities in school engagement and attendance among BIPOC students and other at-risk youth, as well as the clear link between relational connectedness, family partnership, and long-term academic achievement.

## **Data Collection Tools and Metrics**

To measure progress, a variety of school-specific and student-centered tools will be utilized:

- *Student Attendance Tracking Systems:* Daily attendance records will be analyzed to identify trends in chronic absenteeism before and after student participation in the initiative.
- *Office Discipline Referrals and Behavior Logs:* These will be monitored to evaluate reductions in disciplinary actions and improvements in behavioral indicators.
- *Academic Progress Monitoring Software:* Tools like PowerSchool will help assess changes in academic performance and participation.
- *Youthworks Assessment Instruments:*
  - The Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) will measure students' internal strengths and external supports.
  - The Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2) will identify behavioral health concerns, emotional distress, and psychosocial needs.

Together, these tools will yield a comprehensive student profile that reflects growth, challenges, and evolving support needs throughout the course of the intervention.

## **Data Sharing and Integration**

Schools will provide Youthworks with pre- and post-intervention data on attendance, behavior, and academics. Youthworks will add assessment results, creating a comprehensive student profile.

## **Quarterly Reporting and Feedback**

Youthworks will submit quarterly reports to the North Dakota Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group detailing outcomes, compliance, and lessons learned. These reports will inform program adjustments and help maintain fidelity. Regular virtual team meetings will convene stakeholders—Youthworks, CREA, school staff, and families—to review progress, troubleshoot barriers, and co-develop responsive strategies.

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# Budget Summary

**Applicant:** Mountain-Plains Youth Services Coalition (dba Yo

**Project Period:** 8/1/2025 -- 9/1/2027

	Grant Request	Match	Total
<b>Budget Categories:</b>			
Personnel	122,600.00	-	122,600.00
Fringe Benefits	28,760.00	-	28,760.00
Travel	31,428.00	-	31,428.00
Supplies	3,940.00	-	3,940.00
Subaward/Contractual	-	-	-
Other Direct Costs	-	-	-
Indirect Costs	-	-	-
Total Grant Funds	186,728.00	-	186,728.00

# Budget Detail Worksheet and Narrative

**Applicant:** Mountain-Plains Youth Services Coalition (db)

**Project Period:** 8/1/2025 -- 9/1/2027

Personnel				Total Grant Period		
Position	Name	Annual Salary	Grant Allocation %	Grant Request	Match	Total
Project Coordinator-Bismarck	TBD	\$55,000.00	0.3	\$33,000		\$33,000
Project Coordinator-Minot	TBD	\$55,000.00	0.3	\$33,000		\$33,000
Mentor(s)	TBD	\$17.00	1400	\$47,600		\$47,600
Lead Trainer	TBD	\$50.00	90	\$9,000		\$9,000
Total Personnel Costs				\$122,600	\$0	\$122,600

**Personnel Narrative:**

Youthworks will provide staff to train student mentors, to provide mentoring in the school/community, and to provide assessment of youth to promote a youth's success within their home school. Project Coordinators in each location are included at 30% FTE annually, mentors are included for 1400 hours annually, and the lead trainer for Peer Power Mentoring is included at \$50/hour for 90 hours (one weeklong training and prep time/community/year). Personnel costs total \$122,600 for the grant period.

Fringe Benefits				Total Grant Period		
Position	Name	Annual Benefits	Grant Allocation %	Grant Request	Match	Total
Project Coordinator-Bismarck	TBD	\$33,000	35%	\$11,550		\$11,550
Project Coordinator-Minot	TBD	\$33,000	35%	\$11,550		\$11,550
Mentor(s)	TBD	\$47,600	10%	\$4,760		\$4,760
Lead Trainer	TBD	\$9,000	10%	\$900		\$900
Total Fringe Benefits				\$28,760	\$0	\$28,760

**Fringe Benefits Narrative:**

Fringe benefits for full-time staff may include: Social Security (7.65%), Unemployment Insurance (1.85%), Worker's Compensation (3%), Health Insurance (15.5%), and Retirement (7%). Part-time staff's (trainer and mentors) fringe benefits are calculated at 10% of the hourly pay. Fringe costs total \$28,760 for the grant period.

Travel			Total Grant Period		
Purpose	Location	Expense Type (Hotel/Mileage/Per Diem)	Grant Request	Match	Total
Local pick up and drop off	Bismarck and surrounding area	Mileage @ 0.70/mile	\$13,832		\$13,832
Local pick up and drop off	Minot and surrounding area	Mileage @ 0.70/mile	\$13,832		\$13,832
Peer-to-Peer training costs	Minot / Bismarck	Mileage @ 0.70/mile	\$644		\$644
Peer-to-Peer training costs	Minot / Bismarck	Hotel	\$1,760		\$1,760
Peer-to-Peer training costs	Minot / Bismarck	Per Diem	\$1,360		\$1,360
Total Travel Costs			\$31,428	\$0	\$31,428

**Travel Costs Narrative:**

To ensure equitable access to services, Youthworks will offer transportation to youth enrolled in the project and/or will travel to youth's home community/school. Given the geographic reach of the proposed project, Youthworks is requesting \$27,664 for travel during the grant period. Additionally, the Lead Trainer for the peer-to-peer mentor training will require mileage, hotel and per diem reimbursement for the four annual trainings that will be provided to CREA consortium school youth. Travel expenses include hotel costs for 16 nights (4 nights/training) and per diem reimbursement for 20 days (5 days/training), using federal reimbursement rates. Total travel expenses for the grant period are \$31,428.

Supplies			Total Grant Period		
Item	Quantity	Per Unit Cost	Grant Request	Match	Total
Peer-to-peer training materials	2.00	\$1,970	\$3,940		\$3,940
Total Supply Costs			\$3,940	\$0	\$3,940

**Supply Costs Narrative:**

The Peer Power Mentor training requires materials and supplies for successful implementation. Materials will include training manuals, activity supplies, etc. An annual cost of \$1,970 is projected for these trainings or \$3,940 for the grant period.



Subawards/Contracts		Total Grant Period		
Description/Purpose	Computation	Grant Request	Match	Total
Total Subaward/Contractual Costs		\$0	\$0	\$0
Subaward/Contractual Costs Narrative:				

Other Direct Costs		Total Grant Period		
Type	Computation	Grant Request	Match	Total
Total Other Direct Costs		\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Direct Costs Narrative:				

Indirect Costs			Total Grant Period		
Description	Base	Rate	Grant Request	Match	Total
Total Indirect Costs			\$0	\$0	\$0
Indirect Cost Narrative:					



March 26, 2025

**Luke Schaefer, CEO - Central Regional Education Association (CREA)**  
**Mark Heinert, Assistant ED - Youthworks**

**Subject: Letter of Intent to Partner in the Connected Communities Initiative**

Dear Luke and Mark:

On behalf of Bismarck Public Schools, we are pleased to submit this **Letter of Intent** expressing our commitment to **partnering with the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) and Youthworks** in implementing the **Connected Communities Initiative**. We recognize the critical need to support students who are experiencing **behavioral, emotional, and academic challenges** and are committed to providing meaningful interventions that foster student engagement and success.

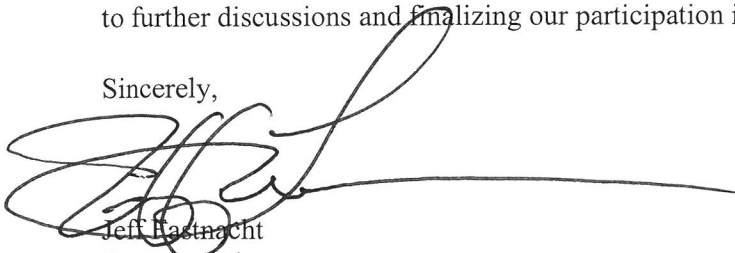
As a participating school district, **we agree to:**

1. **Identify a School Champion** – We will designate a staff member who will serve as the primary liaison between our district, Youthworks, and CREA, ensuring seamless coordination of services.
2. **Coordinate Training for Students** – We will support the implementation of **peer-to-peer mentorship training** and facilitate student participation in the initiative.
3. **Collaborate with Youthworks** – Our district will work closely with Youthworks to **identify students in need of support**, ensure timely access to assessment services, and coordinate mentoring opportunities.
4. **Integrate Services into School Support Frameworks** – We will make every effort to leverage the resources provided through this initiative **before resorting to disciplinary action** to promote positive outcomes for students.

We understand that **the Connected Communities Initiative is designed to reduce student disengagement, improve school attendance, and provide essential social-emotional support**. Our district is committed to working collaboratively with CREA and Youthworks to ensure the success of this initiative and to create a **more inclusive, supportive school environment** for our students.

Please consider this letter as our formal **expression of interest** in joining this initiative. We look forward to further discussions and finalizing our participation in this important effort.

Sincerely,



Jeff Bastnacht  
Superintendent  
Bismarck Public Schools

May 21, 2025

Luke Schaefer, CEO - Central Regional Education Association (CREA)  
Mark Heinert, Assistant ED - Youthworks

Subject: Letter of Intent to Partner in the Connected Communities Initiative

Dear Luke and Mark:

On behalf of Wilton Public Schools we are pleased to submit this Letter of Intent expressing our commitment to partnering with the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) and Youthworks in implementing the Connected Communities Initiative. We recognize the critical need to support students who are experiencing behavioral, emotional, and academic challenges and are committed to providing meaningful interventions that foster student engagement and success.


As a participating school district, we agree to:

1. Identify a School Champion – We will designate a staff member who will serve as the primary liaison between our district, Youthworks, and CREA, ensuring seamless coordination of services.
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We understand that the Connected Communities Initiative is designed to reduce student disengagement, improve school attendance, and provide essential social-emotional support. Our district is committed to working collaboratively with CREA and Youthworks to ensure the success of this initiative and to create a more inclusive, supportive school environment for our students.

Please consider this letter as our formal expression of interest in joining this initiative. We look forward to further discussions and finalizing our participation in this important effort.

Sincerely,

  
Andrew Jordan  
Superintendent  
Wilton Public Schools  
Andrew.jordan@k12.nd.us

**School Board**

Jessica Oswald, President  
Kylee Schuh, Vice-President  
Jason Gregoryk  
Misty Schafer  
Troy Speten

**Administration**

Andrew Jordan, Superintendent  
Macy Wood, Elementary Principal  
Cori Hilzendeger, Secondary Principal  
**Business Manager**  
Jenna Kirchmeier

## GLENBURN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 26

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Jamee Hansen, President  
Scott Heit, Vice President  
Dianne Hensen  
Tyler Mickelson  
Tyler Hansen

*"Panther Country"*  
PO Box 138  
Glenburn ND 58740  
Phone (701) 362-7426  
Fax (701) 362-7349

SUPERINTENDENT  
Larry K. Derr  
PRINCIPALS  
Layne D. Fluhrer  
James P. Swegarden  
BUSINESS MANAGER  
Jennifer Hansen

3/28/2025

**Luke Schaefer, CEO - Central Regional Education Association (CREA)**  
**Mark Heinert, Assistant ED - Youthworks**

**Subject: Letter of Intent to Partner in the Connected Communities Initiative**

Dear Luke and Mark:

On behalf of Glenburn Public School, we are pleased to submit this **Letter of Intent** expressing our commitment to **partnering with the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) and Youthworks** in implementing the **Connected Communities Initiative**. We recognize the critical need to support students who are experiencing **behavioral, emotional, and academic challenges** and are committed to providing meaningful interventions that foster student engagement and success.

As a participating school district, **we agree to:**

1. **Identify a School Champion** – We will designate a staff member who will serve as the primary liaison between our district, Youthworks, and CREA, ensuring seamless coordination of services.
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We understand that **the Connected Communities Initiative is designed to reduce student disengagement, improve school attendance, and provide essential social-emotional support**. Our district is committed to working collaboratively with CREA and Youthworks to ensure the success of this initiative and to create a **more inclusive, supportive school environment** for our students.

Please consider this letter as our formal **expression of interest** in joining this initiative. We look forward to further discussions and finalizing our participation in this important effort.

Sincerely,

Larry Derr  
Superintendent  
Glenburn Public School  
701-362-7426

Larry.Derr@k12.nd.us

**The Glenburn School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs or activities.**





# Mandan Public Schools

901 Division Street  
Mandan, ND 58554  
T: (701) 751-6500 F: (701) 751-6674  
Dr. Mike Bitz, Superintendent  
Dr. Carly Retterath, Asst. Superintendent  
Mr. Ryan Lagasse, Business Manager

March 26, 2025

**Luke Schaefer, CEO - Central Regional Education Association (CREA)**  
**Mark Heinert, Assistant ED - Youthworks**

**Subject: Letter of Intent to Partner in the Connected Communities Initiative**

Dear Luke and Mark:

On behalf of Mandan Public Schools, we are pleased to submit this **Letter of Intent** expressing our commitment to **partnering with the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) and Youthworks** in implementing the **Connected Communities Initiative**. We recognize the critical need to support students who are experiencing **behavioral, emotional, and academic challenges** and are committed to providing meaningful interventions that foster student engagement and success.

As a participating school district, **we agree to:**

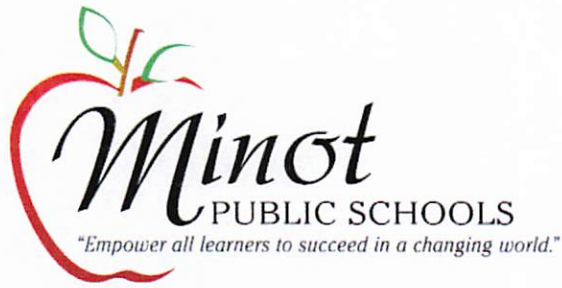
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We understand that **the Connected Communities Initiative is designed to reduce student disengagement, improve school attendance, and provide essential social-emotional support**. Our district is committed to working collaboratively with CREA and Youthworks to ensure the success of this initiative and to create a **more inclusive, supportive school environment** for our students.

Please consider this letter as our formal **expression of interest** in joining this initiative. We look forward to further discussions and finalizing our participation in this important effort.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carly Retterath  
Assistant Superintendent  
Mandan Public Schools  
W: (701) 751-6500 C: (701) 516-4703



Scott Faul, Superintendent  
Secondary Education

Scott.faul@minot.k12.nd.us  
215 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE • Minot, ND 58701  
Phone 701-857-4456 • Fax 701-857-4432

April 17, 2025

Luke Schaefer, CEO - Central Regional Education Association (CREA)  
Mark Heinert, Assistant ED - Youthworks

**Subject: Letter of Intent to Partner in the Connected Communities Initiative**

Dear Luke and Mark:

On behalf of Minot Public School we are pleased to submit this **Letter of Intent** expressing our commitment to **partnering with the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) and Youthworks** in implementing the **Connected Communities Initiative**. We recognize the critical need to support students who are experiencing **behavioral, emotional, and academic challenges** and are committed to providing meaningful interventions that foster student engagement and success.

As a participating school district, **we agree to:**

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Please consider this letter as our formal **expression of interest** in joining this initiative. We look forward to further discussions and finalizing our participation in this important effort.

Sincerely,



Dr. Scott Faul  
Superintendent