

OTTER TAIL COUNTY - MINNESOTA

TRANSITIONAL YOUTH WORKFORCE HOUSING

SF 917 | HF 229

Otter Tail County is requesting \$1.05 M in state bonding for the construction of a twelve-unit multi-purpose transitional residential facility in Perham, MN. The facility will provide and link transition-aged youth experiencing substance use disorders, mental health concerns, and other challenges, with comprehensive services in a stable and supportive setting. Programming will be provided by community partners who will support the youth in finding gainful employment, housing, and other resources needed to overcome the challenges they face.

› OVERVIEW

The Otter Tail County Youth Leadership Center is a multi-purpose facility that will link comprehensive supportive services in a transitional residential setting. The facility, which will be owned by the Otter Tail County Community Development Agency, will contain offices for supportive service staff and county employees as well as training space. There will be 12 studio units for occupancy by youth experiencing substance use disorder, mental health concerns, and other barriers to stable living, including housing and employment. Transition age youth served will be 15-19 years of age, or up to the age of 21 if subject to Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile disposition and/or eligible for extended foster care. Youth accepted into the program will work with staff to develop a comprehensive plan to achieve short-term and long-term goals, such as investing in overall health and well-being, earning an educational degree, developing occupational readiness, obtaining a driver's license, and improving social and self-care skills. The length of residency will be short-term (6-18 months), with a goal to assist participants in finding permanent, stable housing and employment.



› LOCAL SUPPORT

Programming will be provided by community partners and county staff who will support the youth in developing cognitive behavioral skills, reducing aversions to school attendance, disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline, establishing life skills, maintaining gainful employment, finding stable housing, and accessing other resources needed to overcome the challenges they face. There is considerable local support by major employers, education partners, law enforcement, and other community stakeholders for this program to demonstrate the ability to expand workforce participation and positively impact the community.

› COMMUNITY IMPACT

Otter Tail County currently has over 1,000 job openings; this workforce need, along with an annual unemployment rate of 3%, make it critical that all individuals are productively engaged in the labor force. Research suggests transition age youth have barriers to employment and stable housing. This program will provide a starting point for youth as they transition into the community by providing safe and stable housing, help finding gainful employment, and the support needed to overcome any challenges they face. This integrated, residential supportive service model is unique and does not exist in Greater Minnesota. Existing housing and service programs are not compatible with this type of programming, making funding very challenging. Providing additional supports and resources for youth who generally struggle with poverty, abuse, or neglect creates a pathway for a successful future and reduces negative law enforcement interactions. Investing in our youth through a supportive environment empowers them to thrive and reach their fullest potential for long-term success in our communities.

Nick Leonard, Otter Tail County
nleonard@ottertailcounty.gov
Ph 218-671-5762



Sarah J. Psick, Psick Capitol Solutions, Inc.
psick@psickcapitalsolutions.com
Ph 952-200-4499