

Community Youth Development – Technical Assistance Project

*MN Youth Work Institute
2004-2005 evaluation*

N O V E M B E R 2 0 0 5

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2004-2005 evaluation*

November 2005

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Acknowledgments

The following staff from Wilder Research contributed to the completion of this report:

Mark Anton

Louann Graham

Margaree Levy

Ron Mortenson

Laura Schauben

Lue Thao

Additional contributors include the staff of the Technical Assistance Project.

Introduction

The Technical Assistance Project, a project of the MN Youth Work Institute (and formerly a program of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation), provides technical assistance, consultation and training services to organizations working with community youth development. These services are intended to help organizations build their program and organizational capacity. Workshops were attended by 929 persons during the 2004-2005 fiscal year, the second full fiscal year in which the project has operated. It is not clear how many organizations are represented by this number as having received services. This report provides the results of the immediate follow-up survey completed by individuals involved with the project during fiscal year 2004-2005.

Summary of action items

- Consider ways to tailor the project's services to better meet individual organizations' needs and to help them make changes in their program.
- Encourage networking opportunities among involved organizations.

About the research

This Technical Assistance Project evaluation assesses the following three goals:

1. help organizations understand best practices in youth development and programs;
2. improve the effectiveness of programs and organizations; and
3. develop and conduct improvement goals for agencies' programs or organizational operations.

These goals were evaluated using the following method:

- Wilder Research survey staff interviewed individuals using a phone survey.
- Of the 54 individuals receiving services through the Technical Assistance Project, 51 were eligible and 41 completed the survey for a response rate of 80 percent. (Three individuals were not eligible to complete the survey because they did not receive any of the project's services.)
- Of the individuals who completed the survey, 51 percent are involved with evaluation (Evaluation Matters), 51 percent are involved with training (such as Youth Work Matters), and 12 percent are involved with short or long term general consultation.
- No data are available otherwise about the participants regarding items such as staffing and services.

Program outcome goal

Help organizations understand best practices in youth development and programs

Key findings

- Ninety-three percent of participants report that the Technical Assistance Project increased their knowledge of program effectiveness, exceeding the established performance target of 90 percent.
- Eighty-eight percent of participants report that the Technical Assistance Project increased their knowledge of best practices in areas that affect their organization, almost meeting the established performance target of 90 percent.
- Eighty-five percent of participants report that through the Technical Assistance Project they learned the things they needed to improve their program or organization's capacity.
- Forty-nine percent of participants report that most of what they learned through the Technical Assistance Project was new to them.

Summary of open-ended comments

Participants were asked about the most positive aspect of the services received. Several individuals remarked on the value of learning from other organizations, learning best practices of working with youth, and having materials and resources for improving their knowledge and better understanding other organizational practices.

1. Helping organizations understand best practices in youth development programs (N=41)

| | Performance target | Percentage who say “agree” or “strongly agree” |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| Increased knowledge of program effectiveness | | |
| Through the Technical Assistance Project, I increased my knowledge of program effectiveness. | 90% | 93% |
| Increased knowledge of best practices | | |
| Through the Technical Assistance Project, I increased my knowledge of best practices and research in areas that affect my organization. | 90% | 88% |
| Additional knowledge questions | | |
| Through the Technical Assistance Project, I learned the things I needed to improve my program or organization’s capacity. | a | 85% |
| Most of what I learned through the Technical Assistance Project was new to me. | a | 49% |

^a *No performance target established*

Program outcome goal

Improve the effectiveness of programs and organizations

Key findings

- Ninety-eight percent of participants report that they will use course materials from the Technical Assistance Project for their program or organization work in the future.
- Almost three-quarters (73%) of participants report that they use the things they learn in the Technical Assistance Project to make changes in their organization, just missing the established performance target of 75 percent.
- Over three-quarters (77%) of participants report that the technical assistance/training has helped their organization have a greater impact on youth, exceeding the established performance target of 50 percent.
- Sixty percent of participants report that they strengthened their organization's relationship with other organizations involved with youth development, falling short of the established performance target of 90 percent.

Action items

- Consider ways to tailor the project's services to better meet individual organizational needs and to help them make changes in their program.
- Encourage networking opportunities among involved organizations.

Summary of open-ended comments

Several individuals report that the individual attention was the most positive aspect of the project for them, helping them learn what was necessary to improve their program's effectiveness. Participants also commented on the value of networking to learn what other youth development organizations were doing to improve their services. When asked what they would change about the project, a small number of participants commented that more one-on-one training and networking opportunities would be beneficial, emphasizing the importance of these approaches. Others mentioned the need to tailor the project's services to better provide organizations with the knowledge and services they need.

2. Improve the effectiveness of programs and organizations (N=41)

| | Performance target | Percentage who say “agree” or “strongly agree” |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Use of course materials | | |
| I will use the Technical Assistance course materials for program or organizational work in the future. | a | 98% |
| General usefulness of course information | | |
| The information covered in the Technical Assistance Project training was helpful to me in my work with my organization. | a | 93% |
| I use the things I learned in the Technical Assistance Project to make changes in my program or organization. | 75% | 73% |
| The technical assistance/training has helped my program or organization have a greater impact on the youth we serve. | 50% | 77% |
| Improvement of relationships and networks with other youth serving organizations. | | |
| As a result of my work with the Technical Assistance Project, I strengthened my organization’s relationship with other organizations and networks involved with youth development. | 90% | 60% |

^a *No performance target established*

Program outcome goal

Develop and conduct improvement goals for agencies' programs or organizational operations

Key findings

- Seventy percent of participants report that the consultation and service objectives their organization worked on with the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development staff were met or exceeded, below the established performance target of 90 percent.

3. Develop and conduct improvement goals for agencies' programs or organizational operations (N=41)

| | Performance target | Percent who say "met" or "exceeded" |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| To what extent would you say the objectives you and your organization worked on with the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development staff were met? | 90% | 70% |

Satisfaction goal

Individuals will be satisfied with Technical Assistance Project staff and project content

Key findings

- One hundred percent of participants report that they would recommend the MN Youth Work Institute to others.
- At least 93 percent of participants report that they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the following Technical Assistance Project staff attributes: staff’s ability to clarify the focus of their work and goals; relate to people of different backgrounds and learning styles and needs; overall quality of services provided by staff; and usefulness of staff’s suggestions and recommendations.
- Ninety-five percent of participants report that they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the value of the services in relationship to cost.

Summary of open-ended comments

One-quarter of participants said they would change nothing about the program and service they received. Similarly, 30 percent of participants said there were no other resources, trainings, or services they would have liked to have available to them. Having a focus on new immigrants and cross-cultural services, having more and a greater variety of trainings, having more funding, and more resources available for youth are some of the main components that participants would like to have available to them.

Tailoring the project for organization specific needs, providing more training opportunities, offering one-on-one attention, and offering more training time (including a follow-up session) emerged as ideas for improving the project. When asked what other comments they have that might help the staff be more effective in the future, participants also gave positive feedback about the Technical Assistance Project staff, both when asked about the most positive aspect of the project and when asked about what they would improve.

Examples of comments include:

I think [the staff] are doing a great job. I don’t know how they could be more effective. Their staff listens well, understands the problems different agencies have, and then effectively supports us.

They could advertise better... People I talk to are very confused about what the Youth Work Institute does and about what the Youth Work Coalition is about and does.

I really like how they present things but again maybe in smaller groups, being able to work and process in smaller groups. And keep bringing in the youth perspectives. They had brought in a group of youth to share experiences and perspectives and I found that really helpful.

Continue to make themselves available for training and development.

More time for technical assistance during class time.

4. Satisfaction of Technical Assistance clients (N=41)

| | Performance target | Percentage who say "very satisfied" or "satisfied" |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Satisfaction with Technical Assistance staff | | |
| How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to clarify the focus of your organization's work and goals? | a | 93% |
| How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to relate to people of different backgrounds and learning styles and needs? | a | 93% |
| How satisfied are you with the overall quality of services provided by the Technical Assistance Project staff? | a | 95% |
| How satisfied are you with the usefulness of staff's suggestions and recommendations? | a | 100% |
| Satisfaction with cost | | |
| How satisfied are you with the value of the services in relationship to cost? | a | 95% |
| Overall project satisfaction | | |
| I would recommend the Minnesota Youth Work Institute (or the program formerly known as Wilder Community Youth Development) to others. | a | 100% |

^a No performance target established

Appendix

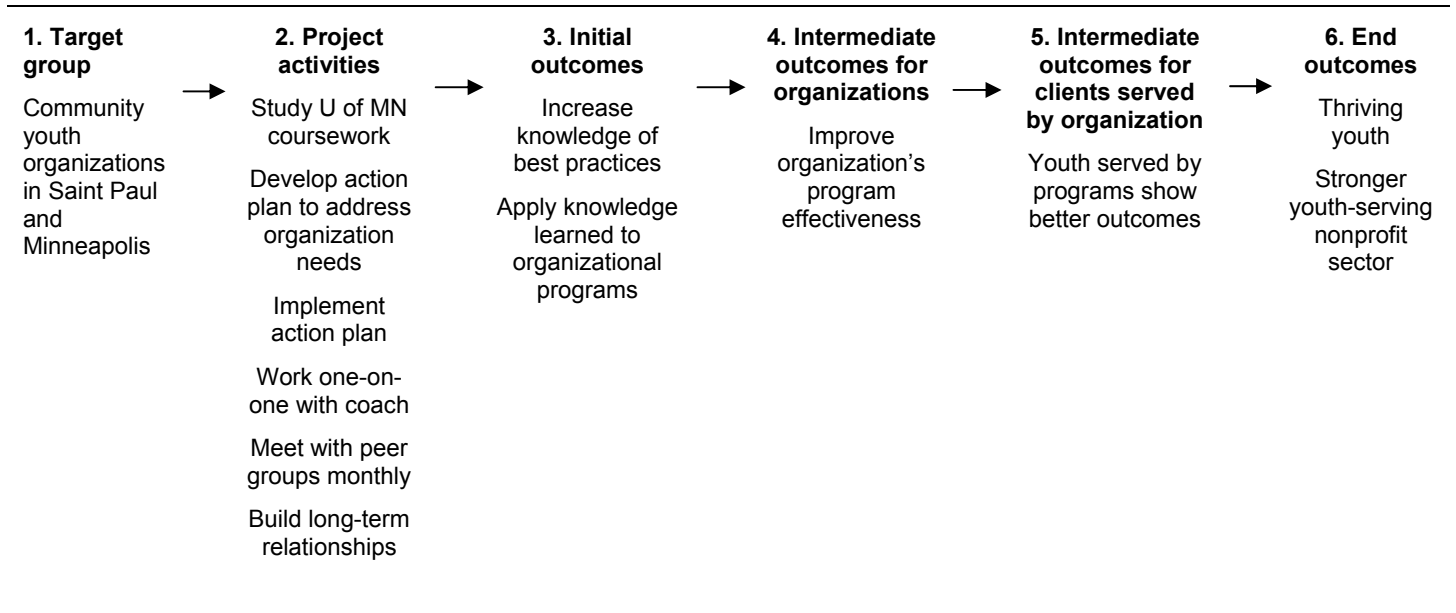
Logic model

Open-ended comments

Immediate outcomes and satisfaction survey

Community Youth Development – Technical Assistance Project logic model

Evaluation logic model



Open-ended comments

A1. What was the most positive aspect of the services you received?

| What was the most positive aspect of the services you received? | Number of responses |
|--|----------------------------|
| Networking with/learning from other organizations | n=12 |
| Staff knowledge and skills | n=6 |
| Resources and materials | n=6 |
| The breakdown/clarification on the evaluation process | n=6 |
| Individual attention | n=4 |
| Support and encouragement from staff | n=4 |
| Solutions to organizational concerns | n=4 |
| Best practices working with youth | n=3 |
| Facilitation | n=2 |
| Learning about organization | n=1 |
| Staff other | n=1 |
| Nothing | n=1 |
| Total | N=50 |

Note: *Multiple responses allowed*

A2. If you could change one thing about the services you received, what would that be?

| If you could change one thing about the services you received, what would that be? | Number of responses |
|---|----------------------------|
| Nothing | n=10 |
| Tailor services to organization's needs | n=5 |
| More training opportunities | n=4 |
| More one-on-one attention | n=3 |
| More training time | n=3 |
| A follow-up session | n=3 |
| More experienced, knowledgeable, or skilled staff | n=2 |
| Cost | n=2 |
| More exploration in-depth of the issue | n=2 |
| More networking opportunities | n=1 |
| More information and resources | n=1 |
| Timeliness | n=1 |
| On-site training | n=1 |
| More comfortable environment for all groups of people | n=1 |
| Have an education worker component | n=1 |
| Total | N=40 |

Note: *Multiple responses allowed*

A3. What other resources, trainings, or services would you have liked to have available to you through the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Development program?

| What other resources, trainings, or services would you have liked to have available to you through the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Development program? | Number of Responses |
|--|----------------------------|
| Nothing | n=12 |
| Focus on cross culturally/New immigrant | n=5 |
| More trainings/more variety/more opportunities | n=5 |
| More funding/more resources on funding | n=5 |
| More resources on available services for youth | n=2 |
| Follow-ups/on-going contacts | n=2 |
| Focusing on young women | n=1 |
| More relevant/topical services | n=1 |
| Policy-making for youth workers | n=1 |
| More communication/input from the youth | n=1 |
| Make it more available/more available resources (websites) | n=1 |
| Computer training | n=1 |
| Pregnancy prevention | n=1 |
| Help with setting up a curriculum | n=1 |
| More experienced staff | n=1 |
| Total | N=40 |

Note: *Multiple responses allowed*

A4. What other comments do you have for the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development staff that might help them be more effective when working with organizations or groups like yours?

Nothing/good

I can't think of anything.

I can't think of anything.

No I have no comment.

I don't have any.

I think they were really good.

They did a good job. I can't think of anything.

No.

None.

I don't know. Keep doing what they have been doing.

They were very good in their presentations and one-on-ones. I have done other trainings from them. I really don't have improvements for them.

To me it was all wonderful. I have nothing to compare it to.

Nothing.

No comment. It is inappropriate.

I really appreciate what they already do. I encourage them to keep it up. Keep innovating. Keep offering new things.

Nothing. I think they do a great job. I don't have any complaints or suggestions.

None. I don't really have any.

Nothing.

Staff

I'm very pleased with the staff and the work they do. No comment.

None. I would commend the staff on pulling together a diverse team to run that training. That team training is key.

Our instructors were very good. We had a broad spectrum of people in the class and they were good at incorporating us all. So I would just say keep up the good work.

They were good. The information shared will help us be more effective grant writers. One facilitator shared too much personal information.

I thought they did a good job. I think being more flexible would be the one.

I don't know. They have been great. The staff are always knowledgeable. They don't pretend to know everything. They let you know they have questions about things themselves.

**A4. What other comments do you have for the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development staff that might help them be more effective when working with organizations or groups like yours?
(continued)**

Staff (continued)

I think facilitators need to have more diversity, more racial diversity among them. Always, always, always we need to be training our own people. That is something Wilder needs to consider for any of its trainings. The thinking for putting together the logic model is very linear but out thinking is more circular. They were very patient in letting us figure out how to relate it to our circular way. The facilitators were very open, not saying we had to do it their way but the training is very linear. It was very challenging for us to be able to adapt it. The process to adapt it was very difficult, very challenging.

I think they are doing a great job. I don't know how they could be more effective. Their staff listens well, understands the problems different agencies have, and then effectively supports us.

I think Marika Peppercorn does a really good job of making connections with the community and with community-based organizations.

Resources, training, and technical assistance

Refining the data on the web.

I haven't gone to them for anything specific so I don't know whether they have an assessment tool they use. That is a hard one for me to say. I assume when an organization goes to them they have to have a way to analyze the organization, so see what is. Sometimes people think one thing is wrong but what is really going on is something totally different. I would think they would have some sort of assessment tool helping organizations to analyze the "as is" and the problem.

Continue to make themselves available for training and development.

I appreciate their time but we would like more guidelines from them.

I guess if we came across problems in the future. They invited us to stay in touch with them. Maybe they gave us a number or an email but I missed the last class. That would be helpful if they do that already and if they don't do that already, that would be very helpful for them to do.

Having a list of resources or people who can help in certain areas because they don't have the time to spend with you themselves. A list of people you can contact as resources to help you with administrative or other things at reasonable costs. Who can you go to for help with skills you don't have yourself?

Again more time for technical assistance during class time.

One-on-one and consultation

I would go back to the more availability for consultation. Many times I and my colleague felt like we were at the edge of a breakthrough and felt we wanted to go back to the staff for confirmation from them but we were out of consultation time.

I found the whole "Evaluation Matters" helpful and relevant. They should continue doing what they are doing. There is one-on-one work, consultation that goes on. It was somewhat a waste of time for participants to sit 20-30 minutes waiting for their one-on-one time. I don't know that there is anything that can be done to change that. Also some evaluation trainings can get heady real quick but this one stayed grounded.

**A4. What other comments do you have for the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development staff that might help them be more effective when working with organizations or groups like yours?
(continued)**

Specific organization needs

I can't think of anything other than a follow-up that is a little more structured. I think the cost was excellent.

No. We really appreciated what they did. They were willing to look at their logic model in a different manner for our community.

Advertising

They could advertise better. We have a huge youth department in our organization but I am the only one who receives the information and I forward it around. They could advertise better to agencies or if it was a more intentional role to have key people at each agency be the contact who is kept informed. There should be better communication with the Youth Development and Leadership program at the university so they are kept more informed about it and have the opportunity to be involved in it. Have a clearer idea or message of what they are. People I talk to are very confused about what the Youth Work Institute does and about what the Youth Work Coalition is about and does.

I know it's a useful service/program. I don't think many other organizations know about the services. I don't really have any other comment.

Youth perspectives

I really like how they present things but again maybe in smaller groups, being able to work and process in smaller groups. And keep bringing in the youth perspectives. They had brought in a group of youth to share experiences and perspectives and I found that really helpful.

Keep the youths (kids) as the main focus of their work.

Immediate outcomes and satisfaction survey

CASE ID#: _____

Time: _____
(24 hour clock)

Youth Work Institute (Formerly Wilder Technical Assistance Project) Immediate Outcomes and Satisfaction Phone Survey

Organization code: 70465

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from Wilder Research on behalf of the Minnesota Youth Work Institute which you may know as the former Wilder Community Youth Development program. May I please speak with [NAME OF POTENTIAL RESPONDENT]?

IF RESPONDENT IS NOT AVAILABLE ASK: When would be a good time to reach (him/her)?

RECORD CALL BACK INFORMATION ON FACESHEET.

WHEN RESPONDENT IS ON THE PHONE, REPEAT AS NEEDED:

(Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from Wilder Research on behalf of the Minnesota Youth Work Institute which you may know as the former Wilder Community Youth Development program.) We want to talk with you about your impression of the services you received. Your answers will be kept confidential; your name will not be included in any written reports.

The interview takes about 10 minutes on the telephone. Would you be willing to participate?

IF YES: If this is a good time, we could do it now. **IF NOT A GOOD TIME, ASK FOR A BETTER TIME AND NOTE ON FACESHEET.**

IF REFUSED: NOTE REASONS FOR REFUSALS ON THE FACESHEET. **IF A POTENTIAL RESPONDENT DOES NOT GIVE A REASON FOR REFUSING, ASK:** Is there any reason you would rather not participate?

First, I would like to know what Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development program services you participated in or received?

- 1. Evaluation Matters (technical assistance program)
 - Yes 1
 - No 2
 - Refused 7
 - Don't know 8

- 2. Training (such as Youth Work Matters)
 - Yes 1
 - No 2
 - Refused 7
 - Don't know 8

- 3. General consultation (short or long term)
 - Yes 1
 - No 2
 - Refused 7
 - Don't know 8

IF R ANSWERS YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, SKIP TO Q4

IF R ANSWERS NO OR DON'T KNOW TO ALL OF THE ABOVE, ASK

- 3B. Have you received any services from Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development program?
 - Yes 1
 - 3c. What type of service(s)? _____
 - GO TO Q4**
 - No (THANK R AND END INTERVIEW) 2
 - Refused (THANK R AND END INTERVIEW) 7
 - Don't know (THANK R AND END INTERVIEW) 8

Now, I have some questions about your satisfaction with the services you received from the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development staff. Remember, these questions refer to their staff, not your own.

| How satisfied are you with... | Would you say... | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----|----|
| | Very satisfied, | Satisfied, | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, | Dissatisfied, or | Very dissatisfied? | REF | DK |
| 4. The staff's ability to clarify the focus of your organization's work and goals? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 5. The staff's ability to relate to people of different backgrounds and learning styles and needs? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 6. The overall quality of services provided by the staff? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 7. The value of the services in relationship to cost? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 8. The usefulness of staff's suggestions and recommendations? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |

Next, I would like to know how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| | Would you say... | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----|----|
| | Strongly agree, | Agree, | Neither agree nor disagree, | Disagree, or | Strongly disagree? | REF | DK |
| 9. Through the technical assistance/training I received, I increased my knowledge of program effectiveness. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 10. Through the technical assistance/training I received, I increased my knowledge of best practices and research in areas that affect my organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 11. The information covered in the technical assistance/training was helpful to me in my work with my organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 12. I will use the information covered in the technical assistance/training for program or organizational work in the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |

| | Would you say... | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----|----|
| | Strongly agree, | Agree, | Neither agree nor disagree, | Disagree, or | Strongly disagree? | REF | DK |
| 13. Most of what I learned through the technical assistance/training was new to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 14. Through the technical assistance/training, I learned the things I needed in order to improve my program or organization's capacity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 15. I use the things I learned through the technical assistance/training to make changes in my program or organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 16. As a result of the technical assistance/training, I strengthened my organization's relationship with other organizations and networks involved with youth development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 17. The technical assistance/training has helped my program or organization have a greater impact on the youth we serve. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| 18. I would recommend the Minnesota Youth Work Institute (or the program formerly known as Wilder Community Youth Development) to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 |

19. To what extent would you say the objectives you and your organization worked on with the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development staff were met? Would you say...

- Not met, 1
- Partially met,..... 2
- Met, or..... 3
- Exceeded? 4
- Refused 7
- Don't know 8

20. What was the most positive aspect of the services you received?

21. If you could change one thing about the services you received, what would that be?

22. What other resources, trainings, or services would you have liked to have available to you through the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development program?

23. What other comments do you have for the Minnesota Youth Work Institute/Wilder Community Youth Development staff that might help them be more effective when working with organizations or groups like yours?

Thanks for taking the time to be interviewed today. We appreciate your help and your time.

Interviewer Name: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer Employee #: _____

Time: _____

(24 hour clock)