



News Release

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Contact: Laura Kuvaas, Director of Marketing,
Recruiting & New Student Experience
320-222-6090

Fax: 320-222-5212
laura.kuvaas@ridgewater.edu
www.ridgewater.edu

Ridgewater Foundation receives \$37,000 Kandiyohi COVID relief grant for students

WILLMAR and HUTCHINSON, MN – If this year’s pandemic has left you unemployed, furloughed or working for reduced wages or hours and you’re interested in furthering your education or training, a new Coronavirus Pandemic Relief (CPR) grant awarded to the Ridgewater College Foundation might be the sign of hope you’ve been waiting for.

Thanks to federal CARES Act funding made available to nonprofits by the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Corporation, the Ridgewater College Foundation has \$37,000 in scholarship funds for eligible students, to be awarded in amounts ranging from \$1000 to \$2000 per student.

“The CPR funds are providing critical assistance to businesses and nonprofit organizations to get through this rough economic patch,” said Aaron Backman, Executive Director for Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar EDC. Thus far, the EDC has received more than 260 applications for assistance. Backman said he anticipates being able to fund about 90% of their applications with available funds.

“Ridgewater College and the Foundation are excellent, local partners for meeting workforce training needs stemming from COVID-19 impacts,” Backman said. “Scholarships like this can have a broad reach in impacting our region.”

These new Kandiyohi COVID Kickstart Scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, with a final award and registration deadline of December 5 quickly approaching. The scholarships are unique in that they can be used for not only credit courses, but also short-term Customized Training and Continuing Education courses and programs.

Student eligibility criteria include:

- Must be a Kandiyohi County resident or be employed (or formerly employed if laid off) by a Kandiyohi County business
- Must demonstrate loss of job/income due to COVID-19
- Must register by December 5 for Ridgewater credit course (s) for spring 2021 OR for a Customized Training/Continuing Education training during November, December or January.

Go to www.ridgewater.edu/kickstart for full criteria details and a list of programs that offer spring starts and short-term trainings available during this grant window.

“We are pleased and proud to partner with the EDC to support our community and provide this support to individuals interested in furthering their education and expanding their workforce skills during this difficult time,” said Kelly Magnuson, Ridgewater Vice President of Advancement and Outreach/Foundation Executive Director. “It’s a wonderful opportunity for those impacted negatively by COVID to consider training and education that might not otherwise be possible.”

Magnuson said she anticipates the demand for Kickstart Scholarships to be high, and expects the funding to benefit approximately 20-37 individuals seeking education and training at Ridgewater in the coming months. Awardees will be notified within approximately 10 days of their application.

To apply or to learn more about the Kandiyohi COVID Kickstart Scholarship, go to www.ridgewater.edu/kickstart or call 320-222-6098.

To learn more about Ridgewater credit-based program admissions, go to www.ridgewater.edu/admissions. To explore non-credit, short-term training, go to www.ridgewater.edu/customized.

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Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 340,000 students. It is the third largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.

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