

March 17, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Marquise Bowie. And I am one of the founders of the MN Bam Mentoring Project, which stands for *Becoming a Man*. I grew up in a single parent home raised by my mom. I didn't have a positive male figure in my life, so I was misguided and ended up in the juvenile system as a teenager. I was looking for something to cling to and the gang and drug life answered the call and fulfilled my emptiness.

So my life is devoted to being what I needed at a young age. And that's working with broken young men like myself. Meeting them where they are and listening to their pain. As I sat in federal prison with a 175-month sentence. I read books, talked with the elders in and out of prison and dedicated myself to a life of service to help young people avoid the pitfalls that trapped me in a rollercoaster lifestyle.

When I joined YIPA a few years ago, it was learning from my younger self through the trainings that resonated with me. A lot of the work takes patience and most importantly funding. And if YIPA were to get more funding, that's gives us more resources and programs that we can create and pour into the youth we work with.

In closing, I support Paul and the YIP grant because the support that they've had for me is making a drastic change in the lives of the youth in the community. Thank you for your time and patience.

Sincerely,

Marquise Bowie

