



Preliminary Report
SFY 2017 Minnesota Youth at Work Equity Grants

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Minnesota Youth at Work Equity Grants

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

Background

This is an update on the status of the SFY2017 Minnesota Youth at Work Equity Grants. The Minnesota Legislature authorized the Youth at Work equity grants in [Laws of Minnesota, 2016, Chapter 189, Article 12, Section 2, Subdivision 2\(k\)](#). The legislation directed the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to develop and implement an equity grant program to provide workforce development activities and training to youth in Minnesota. The total amount of funding available is \$1,000,000 for SFY 2017 from the general fund (Note: the legislation permits DEED to retain five percent of these funds for administration and monitoring, making the total amount available for grants equal to \$950,000 per year).

DEED's Office of Youth Development developed a Request For Proposals (RFP) for Youth Employment and Training Programs; the notice of funding availability was posted on DEED's website and published in the State Register on 8/29/2016.

DEED identified the following priorities, impact areas and goals for all proposals:

Provide summer and/or year-round work experience and introduction to career pathways for economically disadvantaged or at-risk youth, ages 14 through 24 (including those who are out-of-school and/or involved in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, residing in MFIP households, youth with disabilities, and youth from communities of color who are under-represented in the workforce; homeless and/or runaways); and,

- Increase exposure to in-demand jobs important to regional economies; and,
- Introduce and promote career pathways and skill acquisition (academic and work readiness) through project-based instruction; and,
- Promote mastery of work readiness competencies and 21st Century skills, as demonstrated through workplace portfolios and other assessments; and,
- Provide high-quality worksites and overall participant and employer satisfaction. Special consideration was available for proposals which:
 - Included private sector internships and/or work experience in the private sector.
 - Provided students with information about education and training requirements for careers in high-growth, in-demand occupations.
 - Served youth from communities of color who are under-represented in the workforce.
 - Served youth with disabilities.

Methodologies and Processes for Soliciting and Evaluating Grant Proposals

- The RFP was published in the State Register on August 29, 2016, and on the Contract and Grant Opportunities section of DEED's website on the same date:
<http://mn.gov/deed/about/contracts/index.jsp>
- The RFP directed potential applicants to submit any questions following the release of the RFP in writing via e-mail to a specified DEED staff contact person. All questions submitted in writing relating to the RFP were answered and published on DEED's website on a weekly basis.

- DEED's Office of Youth Development hosted a Bidder's Conference via Webinar on September 7, 2016.

Criteria and Methodology for Selecting Grant Recipients

The RFP described the criteria against which proposals were evaluated. Proposals were rated on a 100-point scale covering the following areas: Racial Equity Analysis and Project Design; Project Goals, Activities, and Timetables; Partnerships; Assessment and Evaluation; Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience; and Budget. All applicants were also required to complete and submit a Fiscal Capacity Checklist.

All proposals were read and scored by a panel of reviewers. All reviewers were required to maintain confidentiality during the review process (as per M.S. 13.599) and sign a conflict of interest disclosure form. All final funding decisions (including the amounts awarded) were made by the DEED Commissioner.

Methods and Procedures for Monitoring the Use of Grant Awards

Grant recipients follow standard DEED policies regarding the use of funds and reporting of expenditures on the grant, including the submission of monthly Financial Status Reports (FSRs) reporting all accrued expenditures during the grant period. Grantees are allowed to use up to ten percent of the grant funding for administrative costs, as stated in the RFP. The FSRs are reviewed and approved by the DEED program manager each month. DEED staff monitor all fiscal expenditures, planned vs. actual, including administrative expenditures each month. Financial reconciliation of grantee expenditures is conducted according to the Department of Administration Office of Grants Management policy.

Each grant is monitored on site by DEED during the grant period to ensure that the use of funds is consistent with the approved plan and contract and the intent of the Minnesota Youth at Work Equity Grants.

Methods for Measuring Outcomes and Accomplishments of Grant Recipients

DEED developed the reporting requirements for the Youth at Work Equity Grantees to meet the requirements established in the legislation and to allow appropriate evaluation of the programs. Grantees submit participant data on a quarterly basis and fiscal reports on a monthly basis. DEED staff review all reports to ensure the expenditures and activities are in line with the agency's approved budget and work plan.

All of the Youth at Work Equity Grant recipients will use Workforce One, DEED's case management system to track participants and report a variety of demographic and program activities. Workforce One trainings for new grantees were held at the Dakota County Workforce Center on every Friday throughout February 2017 and March 3rd.

Selection of Grantees

Forty-five (45) proposals were submitted to DEED in this funding cycle, totaling over \$9 million in funding requests. All proposals were read and scored by a team of reviewers. The following 8 organizations were recommended for funding:

Organization	Area Served	Grant SFY 2017
City of Saint Paul	Saint Paul	\$202,970
Minnesota Computers for Schools	Twin Cities metro	\$180,000
Hmong-American Partnership	St. Paul (Frogtown and East Side)	\$150,000
Appetite for Change	North Minneapolis	\$125,000
Migizi Communications	Minneapolis	\$82,030
Genesys Works	Twin Cities metro	\$75,000
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency	Bois Forte Tribal Communities	\$75,000
Project for Pride in Living, Inc.	Minneapolis	\$60,000

City of Saint Paul

Project: Right Track

The Right Track Youth Employment Program is Saint Paul’s pipeline for youth career development and building a diverse future workforce. Right Track brings together the City of Saint Paul, Saint Paul Public Schools, community-based organizations and private businesses to provide work readiness and employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth ages 14-24, as well as youth in this age group facing other barriers to employment. Right Track uses both a public non-profit (subsidized YJ01 jobs) and a private business collaborative model (employer-paid internships – YJ02 jobs) that maximizes the strengths of all partners and creates pathways for young people to grow and develop into productive, contributing adults.

Minnesota Computers for Schools (MCFS)

Project: CORE: IT Workforce Development Training and Bridge Pathway for Youth

MCFS works to systemically address economic and racial disparities in the Twin Cities by providing low-income youth and young adults of color technology training and certification and equipping them with the skills and motivation to pursue an education and subsequent career in Information Technology (IT). Through the CORE:IT Workforce Development program, MCFS offers technology education and training directly to students in schools and community settings- including digital literacy and computer programming education, computer refurbishing and recycling (workforce) training, college search, and career readiness skills.

Hmong-American Partnership (HAP)

Project: Youth at Work

HAP partners with private employers and post-secondary training institutes to provide employability skills training and paid work experience through three tracks: construction, information technology, and health services. Youth will be offered entry level course credits or certification in a field. HAP will expand the existing Youth at Work program by offering new career pathways: Certified Nursing Assistant, Trained Medication Aide, and Customer Service for low-income Southeast Asian youth from the East Side and Frog Town neighborhoods of Saint Paul.

Appetite for Change

Project: Youth Employment and Training Program

Appetite For Change (AFC) uses food as a tool to build health, wealth and social change in North Minneapolis. The Youth Employment & Training Program provides vital learning, employment and leadership opportunities for North Minneapolis young people ages 14 to 24. Youth interns learn to facilitate Community Cooks workshops, maintain urban farm plots, sell produce, and engage the community in leadership development through the Good Food Movement advocacy work.

Migizi Communications

Project: Indigenous Pathways to Economic Independence- Green Jobs Pathways

The project will re-engage youth in education and employment with an overall goal of increasing the percentage of American Indian young people able to complete high school, succeed in post-secondary programs, and secure high-demand jobs in Minnesota's culturally-resonant, growing green economy. The pathway will provide youth with other supports critical to their success and retention including hands-on learning and exploration of renewable energy technologies, academic support, and paid internships in green jobs.

Genesys Works

Project: Skills Training, Internships, and College Support for Disadvantaged Youth

Genesys Works will provide a program with three interlocking core components: an eight-week summer boot camp with a curriculum concentrating on professional and business technology skills; paid internships at a corporate partner which provide an opportunity to apply the skills learned during the summer training and gain meaningful professional experience in the Information Technology field; and college counseling sessions during the youth's senior year to help the student develop a plan to successfully pursue a postsecondary credential and navigate a future career path.

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

Project: Anokiiwin Youth Training Program

The Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency and Bois Forte Reservation Tribal government are partnering to offer the Anokiiwin Youth Training Program (AYTP). AYTP includes case management, specialized training while part of a paid work experience, and post-program job placement. Each participant will be provided life skills and work skills training; basic literacy and financial literacy skills; and will learn construction skills through hands-on experience rehabbing Bois Forte Tribally owned affordable housing properties. Throughout the program, youth will have the opportunity to engage in culturally specific learning opportunities including traditional skills such as ricing, Anishinabe language learning, and culturally specific construction related projects.

Project for Pride in Living, Inc.

Project: Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential (LEAP) Initiative

The LEAP Initiative aims to bring together existing, disjointed programs in Minneapolis to create a coordinated resource to serve disconnected, county-involved youth (ages 14-24) enrolled in contract alternative schools and improve their education, employment, and life outcomes. A coordinated system of support for students will include: referral and enrollment; wraparound support and coordination; mental health support; work-based learning; financial literacy education; post-secondary education; career pathways programs; and youth engagement.