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# SFY 2023 Youth Support Services Opportunity Grant

Annual Report  
1/2/2024

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Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development  
Employment and Training Programs Division

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## Background

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The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$1,000,000 each year in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 and 2023 for a competitive grant program to provide grants to organizations that provide support services for individuals. Of this appropriation, \$475,000 per SFY was available for grant awards under the Youth Support Services competitive grant program. The grants had to have a focus on individuals from low-income communities and/or young adults (ages 14-24) from families with a history of intergenerational poverty, and/or communities of color. ([Minnesota Session Laws – 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 10, S.F. 9, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 3\(g\)](#))

## Grant Requirements

Eligible applicants were local government units (including tribal governments), nonprofit/community-based organizations, community action agencies, business organizations or associations, labor organizations, or public-school districts. The maximum amount of funding that could be requested by any single applicant was \$100,000 per year.

Services provided under this program must serve individuals from the eligible populations in one or more of the following areas:

- Job training,
- Employment preparation,
- Internships,
- Job assistance to parents,
- Financial literacy,
- Academic and behavioral interventions for low-performing students, and/or
- Youth intervention activities

## Overview of the Request for Proposals Process

DEED developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Youth Support Services Competitive Grant funds. This RFP was posted on DEED's website on August 16, 2021 under [Grant and Contract Opportunities](#). Proposals were due by 11:59 p.m. on September 30, 2021.

The DEED Communications team notified an extensive list of interested parties regarding the release of the RFP for the Youth Support Services Competitive Grant. The Office of Youth Development team also shared the Youth Support Services RFP with their networks. Pursuant to State law, the State Register included information about RFPs available through DEED including the Youth Support Services competitive grant.

The RFP directed potential applicants to submit all questions on the RFP in writing via e-mail to a specified DEED contact. All questions submitted in writing were answered on a weekly basis and published on DEED's Grant and Contract Opportunities website. DEED's Office of Youth Development hosted an Informational Webinar about the Youth Support Services funding opportunity on September 9, 2021. A link to the recorded webinar was available on demand on DEED's Grant and Contract Opportunities webpage.

## Grantees

Forty-five proposals were submitted in response to the Youth Support Services RFP, requesting nearly \$3.8 million dollars in funding for SFY 2022 (8 times the amount available to award). All proposals were read and scored by a group of community and state-level reviewers. There were 23 reviewers divided among 5 proposal review teams; 14 (60%) of reviewers were community reviewers.

Based on reviewer scores, the following 13 organizations were recommended for Youth Support Services funding. Seven of the projects were new Youth Support Services grantees (were not funded through this program in the previous biennium). Approximately 72% of the Youth Support Services funds are allocated to projects in the Twin Cities metro area, about 22% allocated to Greater Minnesota, and 6% were allocated to a statewide project.

Organization	Area Served	SFY 2022 Grant Award	SFY 2023 Grant Award
Hennepin Healthcare System	Hennepin County	\$40,000	\$40,000
YMCA of the North	Twin Cities metro area	\$40,000	\$40,000
Workforce Development, Inc	11 counties in Southeast Minnesota	\$40,000	\$40,000
Hired	Greater St. Paul community	\$40,000	\$40,000
Tree Trust	Twin Cities metro area	\$40,000	\$40,000
BrookLynk Youth Employment Program	Cities of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center	\$40,000	\$40,000
Karen Organization of Minnesota	Ramsey County and St. Paul	\$40,000	\$40,000
Achieve Twin Cities	Minneapolis and the Twin Cities metro	\$40,000	\$40,000
Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services	Kandiyohi and McLeod County	\$40,000	\$40,000
Center for Leadership and Neighborhood Engagement	North Minneapolis	\$30,000	\$30,000
Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (COPAL)	Twin Cities and in Greater Minnesota	\$30,000	\$30,000

African Immigrants Community Services	Twin Cities metro area	\$30,000	\$30,000
Duluth Workforce Development	Duluth and Southern St. Louis County	\$25,000	\$25,000
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$475,000</b>	<b>\$475,000</b>

## Project Descriptions

### **Hennepin Healthcare System - On-Ramp to Employment, \$40,000**

This project focuses on providing participants an avenue into a career in the healthcare field. Through this grant participants are provided case management, support services, academic instruction/tutoring, hands-on career exploration, industry credential training and internship-to-hire opportunities. The project serves under-resourced young parents, who live below the poverty level, many of whom identify as non-white.

*Website: [Hennepinhealthcare.org](http://Hennepinhealthcare.org)*

*Local contact: Jennifer DeCubellis, 612-873-6428, [Jennifer.DeCubellis@hcmcd.org](mailto:Jennifer.DeCubellis@hcmcd.org)*

### **YMCA of the North - YMCA Neighborhood Centers Workforce Development Program, \$40,000**

This project provides workforce readiness and job training, internships, wrap-around supportive services, and skill-building to put youth on a path towards in-demand and livable wage employment. Participants are youth living in affordable housing communities, most identifying as non-white, and who are underrepresented in post-secondary education paths and living wage careers.

*Website: [ymcanorth.org](http://ymcanorth.org)*

*Local contact: Glen Gunderson, 612-465-0504, [glen.gunderson@ymcanorth.org](mailto:glen.gunderson@ymcanorth.org)*

### **Workforce Development Inc - Boost Up, \$40,000**

The Boost Up program focuses on serving low-income youth and young adults, from historically underserved populations; including youth of color, youth with disabilities, and those experiencing multigenerational poverty. Services provided include case management, wrap-around support services, and career pathways programming. A key feature of the program includes pairing participants with a professional adult mentor, with a focus on professions in healthcare and information technology.

*Website: [workforcedevelopmentinc.org](http://workforcedevelopmentinc.org)*

*Local contact: Jinny Rietmann, 507-292-5156, [Jrietmann@wdimn.org](mailto:Jrietmann@wdimn.org)*

### **HIRED - Youth Support Services, \$40,000**

This program serves justice involved youth, diversionary youth, and gang and gun violence involved youth and young adults. Most of those served are BIPOC and all are at or below the poverty level. Through this program, participants are provided with career exploration, technology training, case management, and employment coaching for careers in high growth industries, including entrepreneurship. In addition, the program pairs paid work experiences with intensive job coaching.

*Website: [hired.org](http://hired.org)*

*Local contact: Julie Brekke, 612-808-9456, [Julie.brekke@hired.org](mailto:Julie.brekke@hired.org)*

**Tree Trust - Career Pathways, Summer Youth Employment Program and Branches Program, \$40,000**

Program participants are provided entry-level, pre-apprenticeship opportunities and paid job training. Participants work with Crew Leaders, Case Managers, and Job Coaches to prepare for post-program job placement and further educational opportunities, with a focus on the green career industry. Program participants are from historically underserved populations; including BIPOC youth, low-income youth, and youth with disabilities.

*Website: [treetrust.org](http://treetrust.org)*

*Local contact: Jared Smith, 952-767-3891, [jareds@treetrust.org](mailto:jareds@treetrust.org)*

**BrookLynk - BrookLynk Youth Employment Program, \$40,000**

The BrookLynk program consists of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century skill-building, experiential employment opportunities, and local coordination of employer partnerships. BrookLynk facilitates training and paid employment opportunities where youth learn essential job skills such as interviewing, networking, and professionalism. BrookLynk aims to connect young people facing barriers to employment with the skills, experiences, and professional social networks needed to develop their pathway to college and career.

*Website: [brooklynk.works](http://brooklynk.works)*

*Local contact: Breanne Rothstein, 763-493-8058, [Breanne.Rothstein@Brooklynpark.org](mailto:Breanne.Rothstein@Brooklynpark.org)*

**Karen Organization of Minnesota - Youth Education Supports, \$40,000**

This program serves refugee youth of color with a focus on Karen youth with co-occurring struggles with educational attainment, chemical and mental health issues, and/or, justice system involvement. The program provides these youth targeted service interventions, including postsecondary access, financial coaching and employment, and chemical health interventions. The program offers credentialed training in multiple in-demand career pathways including human services, healthcare, manufacturing, and construction trades.

*Website: [mnkaren.org](http://mnkaren.org)*

*Local contacts: Alexis Walstad, 651-202-3120, [awalstad@mnkaren.org](mailto:awalstad@mnkaren.org) or Eh Tah Khu, 651-202-3114, [ekhu@mnkaren.org](mailto:ekhu@mnkaren.org)*

**Achieve Twin Cities - Achieve College Internships, \$40,000**

This program provides career readiness assessment, advanced work readiness training, paid career-oriented internships, and provides ongoing coaching and support services. The program serves BIPOC youth from low-income households that are college juniors and are facing barriers to economic opportunities. Each participant is matched with an internship that best align with their interests, goals, and college majors.

*Website: [achievetwincities.org](http://achievetwincities.org)*

*Local contact: Danielle Grant, 612-455-1530, [dgrant@achievetwincities.org](mailto:dgrant@achievetwincities.org)*

**Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services - PathFinders, \$40,000**

The PathFinders program focuses on serving low-income youth from historically underserved populations; including youth of color and youth with disabilities. The program provides participants the opportunity to grow,

harvest, preserve, market, and sell garden grown food. The programming includes intensive case management, work readiness skills, credentialing opportunities, and a hands-on work experience.

*Website: [cmjts.org](http://cmjts.org)*

*Local contact: Diana Ristamaki, 320-364-0321, [dristamaki@cmjts.org](mailto:dristamaki@cmjts.org)*

**Center for Leadership and Neighborhood Engagement - Northside Futures Lab/Youth Organizing, \$30,000**

This program serves primarily low-income and BIPOC participants with a focus on serving formerly incarcerated youth and/or foster care youth. Through this program, participants are provided career planning, assessments, educational supports, tutoring, and access to career exploration events. These activities all support career strategy planning for in-demand careers with livable wage employment.

*Website: [cne-mn.org](http://cne-mn.org)*

*Local contact: Kelly Chatman, 612-355-1273, [k.chatman@cne-mn.org](mailto:k.chatman@cne-mn.org)*

**Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (COPAL) - Latinx Youth Training Project, \$30,000**

This program serves participants in the Twin Cities metro and in Greater Minnesota, with a significant emphasis on reaching youth outside of the metro area. Participants are low-income first, second, and third generation Latinxs. The program support participants in developing their skills, education, and a career path that will lead to stable employment. A priority of the program is connecting youth to GEDs, short career paths at community colleges, and training programs for in-demand industries such as CNA, manufacturing and metal fabrication, and culinary arts.

*Website: [copalmn.org](http://copalmn.org)*

*Local contact: Francisco Segovia, 612-558-3533, [Franciscos@copalmn.org](mailto:Franciscos@copalmn.org)*

**African Immigrants Community Services - Refugee Job Readiness & Employment Program, \$30,000**

This project serves low-income, Somali and East African youth by providing the cultural understanding needed for appropriate job readiness skill development, paid internships, and job placement and job retention supports to meet the needs of the community and the employer. The focus is on training and certification programs for high demand and high wage jobs and includes providing the navigation services to participants to enroll in these programs and access financial aid.

*Website: [aicsmn.org](http://aicsmn.org)*

*Local contact: Mohamed Ahmed, 952-457-8991, [m.ahmed@aicsmn.org](mailto:m.ahmed@aicsmn.org)*

**Duluth Workforce Development - Freedom Youth Kickstart, \$25,000**

This program primarily serves BIPOC youth from low-income households, providing them support for in-demand career pathways and business ownership as a potential career pathway. Participants will work with job councilors to build work readiness skills and explore entrepreneurship. They will be paired with mentors and will complete a paid internship. Participants will have the opportunity to build financial literacy, repair credit, and work toward completing their GED if needed.

*Website: [Duluthmn.gov/workforce-development](http://Duluthmn.gov/workforce-development)*

*Local contact: Elena Foshay, 218-730-5241, [efoshay@duluthmn.gov](mailto:efoshay@duluthmn.gov)*



## Program Activities

The Support Services Opportunity Grant provides grantees with the flexibility to provide a variety of programming opportunities. The definitions are broad, and the following information provides example activities that align with each category:

**Job Training** – Activities that support participants in receiving industry-recognized credentials, industry-specific certifications, and other career and job specific training.

**Employment Preparation** – Activities including resume writing, job searching, labor market information, soft skills training, job shadowing, business tours, etc.

**Internships** – Paid experiences in which participants can apply technical and soft skills.

**Job Assistance to Parents** – Activities such as employment consulting and skill training, specifically targeted to parents.

**Financial Literacy** – Trainings, workshops, and curriculum in which participants learn about financial literacy concepts.

**Academic and Behavioral Interventions for Low Performing Students** – Activities that support youth from dropping out of school including earning academic credit, literacy and numeracy skills development, and tutoring.

**Youth Intervention Activities** – Activities that support youth and can include wrap around services such as case management and mentoring.

The chart below denotes the activities that each organization is providing through their SFY 23 Youth Support Services Grant.

Project	Job Training	Employment Preparation	Internship or Work Experience	Job Assistance to Parents	Financial Literacy	Academic and Behavioral Interventions for Low Performing Students	Youth Intervention Activities
Hennepin Healthcare System	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
YMCA of the North	x	x	x				
Workforce Development, Inc	x	x			x		
Hired	x	x	x	x	x		
Tree Trust	x	x	x		x		x
BrookLynk Youth Employment Program	x	x	x				
Karen Organization of Minnesota	x	x					
Achieve Twin Cities	x	x	x			x	

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services	x	x	x		x		
Center for Leadership and Neighborhood Engagement		x	x		x		
Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (COPAL)	x	x	x				
African Immigrants Community Services	x	x	x				
Duluth Workforce Development	x	x	x		x		
TOTAL	12	13	11	2	7	2	2

## Program Data

The SFY 2023 Youth Support Services demographic, activity, and outcome data included in this report is the cumulative totals of all 13 SFY 2023 Youth Support Services grantees. It is the final data for these contracts, from the start of the SFY 2023 contracts on July 1, 2022 through the end of the contracts on July 1, 2023 (or September 30, 2023 for the four contracts that were extended through September 2023).

SFY 2023 Youth Support Services - Demographic, Activity, and Outcome Data			
Total Individual Participants Served		425	
Total Individuals served in Group Services		884	
Demographic Data		Total	Percentage
Gender	Identified as Female	199	46.8%
	Identified as Male	208	48.9%
	Other	4	0.9%
	Prefer not to answer	14	3.3%
Age	14 – 15	83	19.5%
	16 – 17	115	27.1%

	18	58	13.6%
	19 – 21	107	25.2%
	22 – 24	55	12.9%
<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	Hispanic/Latino	55	12.9%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	5	1.2%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	70	16.5%
	Black or African American	218	51.3%
	White	58	13.6%
	Multiracial	28	6.6%
	Other/Not disclosed	15	3.5%
<b>Education Level</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade, or less	242	56.9%
	High School graduate or equivalent	54	12.7%
	Post-Secondary Education	114	26.8%
<b>Other Demographics</b>	Limited English Proficient	30	7.1%
	Receiving Public Assistance	83	19.5%
	Foster Youth	4	0.9%
	Participants with a Disability	60	14.1%
	High School Drop-Out	23	5.4%
	Previous Juvenile Justice Involvement	43	10.1%
	Pregnant or Parenting	21	4.9%
	Basic Skills Deficient	34	8.0%
	Homeless or Runaway	15	3.5%
	Not Employed at Program Enrollment	154	36.2%
	Veteran	0	0.0%
	Economically Disadvantaged	238	56.0%
<b>Program Services and Activities Data</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Received Education, Employment Preparation, or Work Readiness/Job Training Activities		331	77.9%
Received Work Experience, Internship, or Apprenticeship Activities		246	57.9%

Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities	120	28.2%
Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities	251	59.1%
Received Mentoring Activities	152	35.8%
Received Support Services	246	57.9%
Received Financial Literacy Education	172	40.5%
Low-performing Students that Received Academic and Behavioral Interventions (Includes Study Skills, Tutoring, and Alternative School Services)	34	8.0%
Youth that Received Intervention Activities	7	1.6%
<b>Performance and Outcome Data</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Attained Work Readiness Goals	260	61.2%
Attained Education Goals	93	21.9%
Received Academic Credit or Service-Learning Credit	18	4.2%
Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Dropout - Returned to School	109	25.6%
Entered Post-Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military	39	9.2%
Entered employment	94	22.1%
Retained employment, increased wages or advanced career	72	16.9%
<b>Participant Satisfaction Data</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage (of responses)</b>
Number of participants rating experience as "Excellent"	102	59.0%
Number of participants rating experience as "Very Good"	56	32.4%
Number of participants rating experience as "Average"	15	8.7%
Number of participants rating experience as "Below Average"	0	0.0%
Number of participants rating experience as "Poor"	0	0.0%
Total Number of Surveys Completed	173	100.0%

## Expenditures

Contracts for the SFY 2023 Youth Support Services Grants all begin on July 1, 2022. The following table lists final SFY 2023 expenditures through the end of the contracts.

Entity	SFY 2023 Allocation	SFY 2023 Expenditures	Percent of SFY 2023 Allocation Expended
DEED Administration	\$25,000	\$25,000	100.0%
Subgrantees (Youth)	\$475,000	\$458,273.18	96.5%
Total	\$500,000	\$483,273.18	96.7%

## Success Stories

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### Daniel – Hired

When Daniel joined the program, he expressed interest in jobs that allowed him to be physically active, but he had limited employment experience. The Hired Employment Counselor identified an organization that agreed, with Hired’s support, to create an internship opportunity for Daniel working in a farmer’s market. As Daniel began his internship, the Hired Employment Counselor stayed in close contact with Daniel’s employer and provided additional coaching, reminders, and support to Daniel. This support from the Hired Employment Counselor was extremely helpful for Daniel, and he was able to address challenges and continue the internship.

As Daniel gained skills, his employer also offered additional opportunities for him to engage in other aspects of their work, including working on a farm, building materials, visiting other sites, and attending management meetings. Through these opportunities, Daniel has built confidence, knowledge, and maturity. The internship has gone so well for Daniel and his employer that the organization has decided to create a full-time position for him after his internship ends. Daniel is excited about this opportunity and now knows that he wants to pursue farming as a career.

### Bilal – African Immigrants Community Services

Bilal, a junior majoring in Economics and Marketing, approached AICS seeking assistance in finding summer internship opportunities related to business, economics, or IT. AICS Staff helped him with internship searches and guided him through the application process. After several weeks, Bilal received the news that he was selected for an internship position with the IT department at the Mall of America. He was genuinely thrilled to start his internship, given his passion for building and troubleshooting computers in his spare time. During his internship, Bilal's role involved assisting the tech support team with various tasks, such as troubleshooting technical issues, diagnosing and repairing faults, and installing and configuring hardware and software. Bilal thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working behind the scenes at the Mall of America and he expressed a strong desire to apply for a position within the company once his internship concludes.

## **D'Angela – Hennepin Healthcare System**

D'Angela was referred to the program as she expressed interest in a healthcare career but had encountered some struggles with college during her pregnancy and was worried about committing to another major without any real exposure to what the job might entail. Her responsibilities at home, both as a new mother and caregiver for her young siblings, added a sense of urgency and importance to her postsecondary planning and decision-making process. After speaking with the Onramp Internship Coordinator and her Teen HOPE public health nurse, D'Angela decided to enroll in the Onramp pre-internship training program.

As part of the month-long course, D'Angela participated in a variety of career exploration workshops, job shadowing and informational interviewing activities and attended Discovery Day at Northwest Health Services University (NWSU). Feeling more confident about her career choice, D'Angela applied for and was accepted into a Clinic Associate internship in the Women's Health Clinic at HCMC and enrolled in NWSU's Medical Assistant training program for the fall term. D'Angela is on-track to earn her AAS Medical Assistant Degree in the Spring of 2024. She plans to apply for the newly created Clinical Assistant position with HCMC with the hopes of advancing into a Medical Assistant position with the hospital upon completion of her degree. D'Angela continues to give back to the program by recruiting new interns and participating as a guest speaker for the pre-internship workshops.

## **Teresa – Duluth Workforce Development**

Teresa was a student at Denfeld High School that was recruited for our first cohort of ABCs (Adulting Basics Classes) in 2022, and she found success in working with facilitators and program staff through Family Freedom Center and YES Duluth. Teresa chose to engage in the second cohort of ABCs during her senior year of high school, and we could see her take a deeper dive into credit building, work readiness training, and empowerment classes. She engaged in career pathways training one-on-one following the ABCs classes and graduated on-time in spring of 2023. Teresa is currently working full time in hospitality and is working with recruiters to prepare for entering the armed forces.

## **Eh Say – Tree Trust**

After hearing about Tree Trust from a friend, Eh Say joined the Branches program to learn about the tree care industry and evaluate it as an avenue for a long-term career. Eh Say displayed great attendance and an eagerness to learn. During his time in the field, he absorbed instruction quickly and sharpened his skills for working outdoors with trees. Eh Say also found great value in his weekly classroom training and was an engaged participant.

Although Eh Say was enjoying the Branches program, he was uncertain if tree care was the right long-term career for him. He met regularly with his Employment Success Coach to discuss other skilled trade career options that would lead to in-demand jobs with sustainable wages. Eh Say participated in mock interviews with some of Tree Trust's employer partners. Through this process, Eh Say met a contact from the Carpenter's Union. Eh Say's 20-minute mock employment interview with this person turned into an informational interview which lasted nearly 90 minutes! Eh Say shared his newfound excitement about carpentry with Tree Trust staff, who

then organized a tour of the Carpenter's Union for the following week. This tour further solidified Eh Say's interest in pursuing carpentry.

Since completing the Branches program in late February 2023, Eh Say has been working with his Employment Success Coach regularly to seek out and apply for apprenticeship positions that are tied to the Carpenter's Union. Through the Branches program, Eh Say identified his desired career path and gained transferable employment skills that he can apply to his future career in carpentry.