



SFY2024-2025 Change Starts With Community

Violence Prevention Jobs Program Grant Appropriation

Legislative Report
12/08/2025

Contact Information

MN Department of Employment and Economic Development

Great Northern Building

180 East 5th Street

St. Paul, MN 55101

Nancy Waisanen

Youth Program Coordinator

Nancy.waisanen@state.mn.us

As required by Minnesota Statute 3.197: This report costs approximately \$161.73 to prepare, including staff time, printing, and mailing expenses.

Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.

Table of Contents

Background.....	4
Program Objectives.....	5-6
Program Narrative Report.....	6
Stories of Impact.....	9-14
Program Conclusion Results.....	14-15

Background

APPROPRIATION: CHANGE STARTS WITH COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION JOBS PROGRAM located at Shiloh Cares Food Shelf Northside Community Safety Resource Center in North Minneapolis. From July 01, 2024, through September 30, 2025, \$1,000,000 was appropriated one time from the general fund to the commissioner of employment and economic development for which \$50,000 was MN DEED admin fees and \$950,000 was allocated for the grant to Change Starts With Community Violence Prevention Jobs Program. The grant aims to establish a comprehensive workforce development initiative, specifically tailored for at-risk youth and BIPOC adults, located on-site at Shiloh Cares Food Shelf-NCSRC at 1201 West Broadway Ste. 2 Minneapolis, MN 55411. This program seeks to enhance employment outcomes, foster economic prosperity, and address the unique challenges faced by unemployed and underemployed individuals in BIPOC areas North Minneapolis, which has some of the highest rates of youth and adult unemployment and gun violence in the state. According to the Minnesota Department of Health (2023), firearm-related deaths among youth ages 15–24 in Hennepin County have risen by 35% over the past three years. Additionally, data from the Minnesota Youth Employment Report (2023) shows that Black and Brown youth in Minneapolis face a 2.5x higher unemployment rate than their white peers. The program addresses these disparities by connecting young people to jobs, mentorship, trauma care, and skill-building.

Program Objectives

The grant funds were utilized to achieve the following objectives: Youth Group Violence Intervention Job Training and Placement: Develop and implement a year-round job training Work Experiences program for youth and adults. (from Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Final Rules 20 CFR 681.600) Change Starts With Community Work experiences are a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in North Minneapolis at Shiloh Cares Food Shelf-Northside Community Safety Resource Center for a limited period for youth. Work experience for youth included paid \$18.00hr. stipends for 20 hours weekly for 20 weeks annually. Workforce for adults included paid \$23.00 hr. for 25 hours weekly for 52 weeks annually. as appropriate. This work experience involved the non-profit sector, Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act or applicable State law, exists. Work experience provides the youth participants with opportunities for a career working in Food Security and Food Justice as well as Agriculture exploration and skill development. The Change Starts With Community Violence Prevention jobs program offers the types of work experiences including summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year when youth are on school breaks.

- We have a program for at-risk youth and adults and provide trusted adult mentorship for at-risk BIPOC youth, providing them with the skills needed for gainful employment and career opportunities which gainful youth and adult employment is a crime deterrent.
- On-site Employment Opportunities for Adults and Youth: Create on-site year-round job opportunities for adults in food security work and food justice at Shiloh Cares Food

Shelf, promoting community engagement and economic development. Youth also engaged in off-site educational career readiness exposure field trips and agriculture gardening sponsored by The Cargill Foundation.

Program Narrative Report

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION	
Grantee: CHANGE STARTS WITH COMMUNITY	Contact: JALILIA ABDUL-BROWN
Phone: 651-440-8113	Email: CHANGESWCMPLS@GMAIL.COM
SFY 2025 GRANT PERIOD OF REPORT: <u>July 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025.</u>	
WORK PLAN PROGRESS: Describe progress in implementing the activities, steps, or other strategies laid out in the approved work plan and progress toward or completion of goals and performance outcomes to date in the applicable areas below.	
Change Starts with Community was awarded a Direct Appropriation grant in the amount of \$950,000.00 to provide comprehensive services to at-risk youth and adults in North Minneapolis. The program anticipated serving 20 youth (up to age 24) and 12 adults, including 3 positions necessary to carry out the workforce violence prevention program. Programming for youth includes supportive services and paid work experience. Youth complete job training programs, civil rights training, and food safety training. Youth generally work 20 hours/week during the summer and often work year-round during other school breaks to keep youth engaged in the program. For the grant period of July 2024-September 2025 youth earned up to \$18.00/ and adults \$23.00 annually.	
CSWC made substantial progress in implementing the activities outlined in our approved DEED work plan. All staffing positions were filled at the beginning of the grant cycle, allowing program operations to commence in July 2024. We were only going to have 20 youth in the stipend program, but we had 25 youth who enrolled in program, while 3 exited due to personal moves out of the area. CSWC kept 23 youth participants enrolled for the entirety of the grant cycle. We integrated trauma-informed support services such as weekly mental health check-ins for all youth participants who are enrolled, developed a culturally responsive curriculum focused on workforce readiness and we partner with "Build Wealth MN" for financial literacy, and College tours, we maintained regular communication with DEED for technical assistance. We use Pantry Saver to track program data, we have youth and adults complete bi-annual "satisfaction survey monkey" evaluations which we use to inform continuous improvement through youth and adult feedback, and partnership debriefs.	
Performance Measures	

Below is a summary of the programmatic performance of the grant for the period to date. The performances measures are the input and end outcome performance goals for the grant.

Plan Versus Actual: The participation plan as compared to actual performance is as follows

	Planned Enrollment	Enrollment (cumulative number of youth at grant's end or most recent quarter)	Percent of Plan
Grant Period (SFY 2025)	20	23	125%

	Planned Goal	Actual
Participants who remain employed	80%	100%
Reduction in recidivism	20%	100%
Community members served	60,000	95,487
		Data on participants served-individual services (at enrollment and cumulative for the SFY)
Received Education, Employment Preparation, or Skills Training Activities	25	
Received Internship or Apprenticeship Activities	0	
Received Community Involvement or Leadership Development Activities	23	
Received Case Management, Guidance, Counseling Services	23	
Obtained High School Diploma or GED	1	
Remained in School or Drop Out Returned to School	20	
Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education	3	
Entered Full-Time Employment	2	
Exited the Program	3	

Performance Summary

Change Starts With Community has exceeded our performance goals

Percent Spent Per Cost Category

The Percent Spent per Cost Category Chart demonstrates Cost Category requirements.

Administration	9%
Participant Wages & Benefits	13%
Direct Services	78%

Progress and Achievements in Program Services and Activities provided to Participants

We successfully recruited 23 youth participants, primarily ages 14–24, through school-based, government and self-referrals, street outreach, and community events. Each youth was enrolled into a cohort model receiving:

- Shiloh Cares Job readiness training
- Life skills and conflict resolution workshops
- Trauma recovery support groups (monthly group services)
- Weekly paid job placement at the Shiloh Cares Food Shelf and learned urban agriculture at our urban Agrihood farm
- Career exposure field trips (e.g., Dougherty Family College, University of Minnesota, HBCU's)
- Financial literacy education via Build Wealth MN
- A+ Online Drivers Education

Services like summer group mental health sessions and monthly breakfast check-ins are provided as group services.

Progress and Achievements in the Program's Purpose

To date, 100% of participants are on track to complete the full program year. Outcomes include:

- 2 youth obtained their driver's licenses (Tylan, James)
- 3 youth placed into new employment rolls (UPS, Personal Care Assistant)
- 8 youth enrolled in Drivers Ed with 6 passing their drivers permit tests
- 8 youth applied for post-secondary education, with 2 admitted for 2025 start and rest of the youth will begin post-secondary education fall 2026

These outcomes align with our goals to reduce violence, increase economic mobility, and promote education.

PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Key challenges included:

- Transportation barriers getting to the worksite, and for off-site exposure trips
- Maintaining consistent youth attendance during summer travel or family obligations
- System navigation gaps when connecting youth to external resources

Solutions included providing bus and gas cards, using a van and rental bus for transport to off-site exposure trips, adding weekend and virtual youth check-ins, and strengthening our external partnership

with Cargill and Hennepin County Safe Communities. We seek continued DEED assistance in linking participants to state-sponsored credentialing programs.

Stories of Impact and Success

Tylan Diamond



When Tylan Diamond first connected with Change Starts With Community's (CSWC) Violence Prevention Jobs Program, he was navigating the challenges of peer pressure and system involvement that often derail young black men, and young men of color in North Minneapolis. Through CSWC's mentorship and workforce training, Tylan went from system involvement to postsecondary success. Tylan began to see a new path forward—one centered on accountability, education, and community impact.

Under the MN DEED-funded workforce model, Tylan participated in paid employment at the Shiloh Cares Food Shelf – Northside Community Safety Resource Center, where he learned valuable soft and hard skills such as teamwork, customer service, time management, and workplace professionalism. CSWC's staff helped Tylan stay on track academically by collaborating with his school counselor and encouraging consistent attendance and goal setting.

In June 2024, Tylan proudly graduated from Camden High School, marking a major milestone for both him and his family. Building on his success, he was accepted into Minnesota State University Moorhead where he is preparing to pursue post-secondary education as a teacher while continuing to participate in the CSWC program during school

breaks. Change Starts With Community provided Tylan with gift cards needed to furnish his dorm and to purchase gas or additional supplies needed for college courses.

"I'm thankful I got connected to the program when I did," Tylan said. "Now I'm headed to college and ready to keep pushing forward."

Tylan's story is a testament to the long-term impact of CSWC's violence prevention workforce model. By aligning employment with mentorship, trauma recovery, and educational advocacy, Tylan gained the tools, confidence, and motivation to complete high school and transition to college. His success demonstrates how early intervention and meaningful employment can redirect a young person's life from risk toward resilience and opportunity.

Andre Dukes II



Andre Dukes II joined the Change Starts With Community Violence Prevention Jobs Program, where he found purpose and community through work and mentorship. Andre was searching for more than a paycheck—he was looking for purpose. Balancing college aspirations with the need for stable employment was difficult, and Andre struggled to find opportunities that fit both his schedule and his calling to serve community with a need to attend college.

Through CSWC's MN DEED-funded workforce initiative, Andre was placed in a paid position at the Shiloh Cares Food Shelf-Northside Community Resource Center, where he learned about food security, urban agriculture, and the power of service. His interest in sustainability grew as he participated in the Agrihood Urban Garden project, a youth-led community farm that grows fresh produce for families in need across North Minneapolis. Andre quickly became known for his leadership and empathy, mentoring younger participants and helping them build work ethics and pride in serving their community. Change Starts With Community provided Andre with gift cards needed to furnish his dorm and to purchase gas or additional supplies needed for college courses.

Today, Andre is enrolled at Crown College in Minnesota, where he is studying while continuing to participate in CSWC's program during college breaks. He remains a strong voice for community healing, emphasizing that employment and belonging are key to preventing violence.

"This program gave me my tribe," Andre shared. "I love working in the urban farm and helping feed our neighbors. It showed me that what we grow isn't just food, it's hope."

Andre's transformation reflects the essence of Change Starts With Community: combining job creation, mentorship, and social purpose to empower BIPOC youth to become leaders. His continued involvement with CSWC proves that when youth feel connected, valued, and equipped, they not only find work—they find themselves.

James King



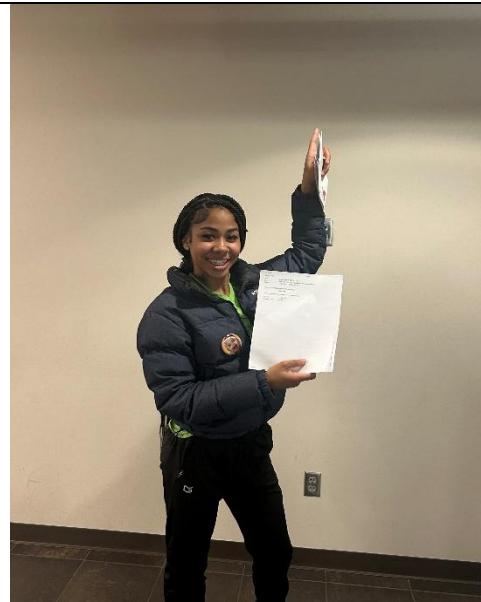
In July 2024, James King, a young adult resident of North Minneapolis, joined the Change Starts With Community (CSWC) Violence Prevention Jobs Program in search of stability and purpose. James began working at the Shiloh Cares Food Shelf, where he received hands-on training in unloading delivery trucks, stocking shelves, food handling, civil rights training, customer service training on how to provide dignified service to food-insecure families. Though he was eager to work, James faced a significant barrier—he didn't have a driver's license and struggled with transportation, which threatened his job reliability and future career opportunities.

Recognizing the challenge, CSWC enrolled James in a driver's education support pathway, covering the costs of his permit testing and behind-the-wheel instruction. With encouragement and case management, James earned his Minnesota driver's license—a major step toward independence.

To help James overcome financial instability, he was also enrolled in the Build Wealth MN youth financial literacy program, where he gained budgeting and savings skills. Earning a livable wage through CSWC's MN DEED–funded program, James began saving diligently and, over time, proudly purchased his first vehicle. This was more than just a mode of transportation, it was a symbol of agency, freedom, and future potential.

His consistency and work ethic at Shiloh Cares caught the attention of local job partners, and with CSWC's referral, in September 2025 James secured permanent full-time employment at UPS. To support this transition, CSWC provided gas cards until he received his first paycheck, eliminating any remaining barriers to consistent attendance and punctuality.

Aniah McCaskel



In 2025, Aniah McCaskel entered the Change Starts With Community (CSWC) Violence Prevention Jobs Program at a pivotal moment in her life. After losing a close friend to gun violence in North Minneapolis, Aniah struggled with unresolved grief, school disengagement, and frequent conflicts with peers. Recognizing the urgency of her situation, CSWC enrolled her into its MN DEED–funded program to provide a pathway toward healing, structure, and hope.

Through intensive case management and trauma-informed mentoring, Aniah transferred to an alternative high school setting that better suited her needs and learning style. Her academic performance began to improve significantly, and she regained her focus on long-term goals. CSWC enrolled her in A+ Online Driver's Education, which she completed successfully, passing her written permit exam—a milestone that restored her confidence and expanded her sense of independence.

Aniah also participated in Build Wealth MN's youth financial literacy program, where she learned the basics of budgeting, saving, and planning for her future. During a college exposure trip arranged by CSWC and coordinated with Cargill affiliates, she visited Dougherty Family College. The experience was transformative. For the first time, Aniah saw college as a real and attainable part of her journey.

"Before this program, I didn't know what was next for me," Aniah shared. "Now I see myself graduating in 2026, going to Dougherty Family College, and maybe even

transferring to a four-year school. I want to make my family proud and give back to North Minneapolis.”

Today, Aniah is not only on track to graduate on time, but she is also mentoring younger girls in the CSWC program, serving as a living example of resilience and growth. Her journey from grief and instability to purpose and leadership embodies the transformational power of early intervention, youth employment, and trusted community investment.

Program Conclusion Results

From July 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025, CSWC employed 25 BIPOC youth and 15 adults, each working between 20–48 hours per week youth worked 20-25 hours each week and paid stipends at \$18/hour and adult participants were paid \$23/hour. Youth participated in job training, stocked food at the food shelf, grew, managed and maintained the Agrihood urban farm, joined monthly trauma groups, and went on over a dozen career exposure trips to sites such as Duluth, Dougherty Family College, and the Minnesota State Capitol. CSWC also supported participants in acquiring drivers permits, driver's licenses, high school diplomas, financial literacy training through “Build Wealth MN”, and new employment placements. No youth were re-arrested or experienced violent incidents during participation in our jobs program.

Program Highlights

- Employed 25 BIPOC youth with 23 consistent job stipend wages and on-site job support, this exceeded the goal of 20 youth.
- Facilitated 16 mental health group sessions and 12 career exposure field trips
- Partnered with Cargill and Build Wealth MN to provide financial, education, scholarships, exposure trips, personal items for the youth and post-secondary pathways

Outcomes

- 100% of participants avoided recidivism and earned food handlers' certificates
- 87% improved workforce readiness and time management skills
- 75% completed financial literacy or driver's education programs
- 3 youth obtained their driver's licenses and 6 obtained drivers permits, and 2 transitioned to post-secondary school or full-time jobs.

Coordination with Other Agencies

- Hennepin County – human services kiosk, mental health referrals
- Second Harvest Heartland – food rescue and nutrition education
- Cargill – agriculture training and garden program funding
- Epiphany Family Services – trauma recovery group facilitation

Program Sustainability

CSWC continues to raise matching funds from philanthropic partners and government sources. The organization plans to sustain jobs and services through continued Cargill and MN DEED funding, while pursuing new partnerships for youth leadership and food justice.