



Minnesota Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot Program

Report to the Legislature
as required by Laws of Minnesota, 2011 Special Session 1, Chapter 4, Article I, Section 3,
Subdivision 3(u)

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Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot Program Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

Background

The Minnesota Legislature first authorized the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot program in 2011 Session Laws, Chapter 4, Article 1, Section 3, Subdivision 3(u). The Commissioner, in consultation with the Governor's Workforce Development Council, developed and implemented a competitive grant program to provide workforce development activities and training to youth in Minnesota for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2013. \$2,848,000 was appropriated from the workforce development fund for the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot program for SFY 2013. [Note: the enabling legislation also permitted DEED to retain five percent of these funds for administrative purposes, making the amount available for grants equal to \$2,705,600.]

As directed in the authorizing legislation, consideration was given to programs that targeted deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf/blind students. Subdivision 5 of the authorizing legislation further specified that an organization which received a direct appropriation under Section 3 was not eligible to participate in the competitive grant program for the same Fiscal Year in which the direct appropriation was received.

Methodologies and Processes for Soliciting and Evaluating Grant Proposals

DEED staff developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Pilot Program in consultation with the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC). The RFP identified the following priorities, impact areas and goals for all proposals:

- Provide work experience 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); and,
- Promote mastery of work readiness competencies and 21st Century skills, as demonstrated through workplace portfolios and other assessments; and,
- Promote skill acquisition (academic and work readiness) through project-based instruction; and,
- Increase exposure to in-demand jobs important to regional economies; and,
- Provide high-quality worksites and overall participant and employer satisfaction.

The RFP gave special consideration to projects serving youth from communities of color and projects serving deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind youth.

The RFP was released to the public through DEED's website on October 31, 2011 and in the State Register on November 7, 2011. DEED received thirty-two Letters of Intent to Apply on or before the January 9, 2012 deadline. Twenty-eight full proposals,

requesting \$9,166,093 in funding, were received on or before the February 10, 2012 deadline. The geographic breakdown of the full proposals was as follows:

- Three statewide proposals (\$1,610,050 total)
- Ten proposals from organizations in Greater Minnesota (\$1,953,437 total)
- Fifteen proposals from organizations in the seven county Twin Cities Metropolitan area (\$5,602,606 total)

One of the 28 submitted proposals was for a program targeting deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf/blind students.

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: Project Description; Project Goals, Activities and Timetables; Partnerships; Assessment and Evaluation; Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience; Budget; and Letters of Commitment. All applicants were also required to complete and submit a Fiscal Capacity Checklist.

All proposals were read and scored by a panel of reviewers. A separate review panel read and scored the proposal for the project focused on the service needs of deaf, hard-of-hearing or deaf-blind youth.

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. All applicants, successful and unsuccessful, were notified in writing of the funding decisions on March 9, 2012.

The following seven projects were selected for funding:

Youth Job Corps, Parks and Recreation Department, city of Saint Paul, \$560,600.

The [Youth Job Corps program](#) connects at-risk youth with 30 local partners to provide summer employment opportunities throughout the city. The project exposes youth to in-demand jobs, especially in the green economy and through the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Academy. Academic credit and certifications are available for high school students. Eighty-nine percent of youth are from communities of color. *Local contact:* Trenton Henspeter, 651-266-6363

STEP-UP Program, city of Minneapolis, \$850,000. [STEP-UP](#)

provides summer work experiences for Minneapolis youth through a nationally-recognized model with an effective public/private partnership. The participants are introduced to in-demand occupations and STEM careers. STEP-UP leverages private sector investment. More than \$1 million in STEP-UP youth wages are paid by private-sector employers. Ninety percent of youth are from communities of color. *Local contact:* Tammy Dickinson, 612-673-5041

Teen Teamworks/Learn to Earn Program, city of Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, \$300,000. [Teen Teamworks](#) (Learn to Earn) combines summer work experience and academic enrichment/credit for economically disadvantaged at-risk Minneapolis youth. Ninety percent of youth are from communities of color. The program offers work opportunities in neighborhood parks, natural areas, shorelines and recreation centers and introduces youth to in-demand green jobs and STEM careers. Worksite crew leaders and supervisors play a mentoring role with the youth. *Local contact:* Linda Tkaczik, 612-313-7744

South Central Workforce Council/Minnesota Valley Action Council, Mankato, \$135,000. [Minnesota Valley Action Council](#) targets services to youth from communities of color in the nine-county service area. The project emphasizes parental/family involvement, identifies in-demand occupations, and enhances job-seeking skills for both youth and parents/guardians. Academic credit and credentials are available. The project includes mentoring and training for worksite supervisors that emphasizes working with youth from diverse cultures. *Local contact:* Heather Gleason, 507-345-2418

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, Virginia, \$135,000. The [Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training](#) Career EdVenture connects area businesses and business associations with schools to complement efforts already underway in schools to prepare students for the world of work. The project includes linkages with tribal secondary and post-secondary schools and a focus on services to Native American youth. The project includes work experience and a “menu of services” from which each school can select activities and resources. *Local contact:* Michelle Ufford, 218-748-2200

Boys and Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities, \$375,000. The [Boys and Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities](#) program serves youth 16 to 19 years old across their network of 55 club sites in low-income areas throughout Minnesota. Participants create a plan of action to secure paid or unpaid work experience within 90 days of completing the Club’s Job Ready or Career Launch programs. Mentoring and job shadowing are also available. Two-thirds of participants are youth of color and 24 percent of Minnesota club sites are located on tribal lands. *Local contact:* Jackie West, 651-200-4110

Project VECTOR, Intermediate District 287, Twin Cities metro area, \$350,000. The [Project VECTOR](#)/InVEST D/HH Youth Workforce Project provides comprehensive work readiness and work experience services exclusively for at-risk young adults, age 16 to 24, who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing, to promote positive employment outcomes toward self-sufficiency. The project serves primarily the western Twin Cities area but draws students from schools throughout the state. Partners include private-sector employers, secondary and post-secondary schools. Seventy percent of participants are youth of color. *Local contact:* Tina Sunda, 763-205-7656

Methods and Procedures for Monitoring the Use of Grant Awards

Grant agreements for successful applicants began July 1, 2012 and ended June 30, 2013. Grant recipients followed 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 were allowed to use up to five percent of the grant funding for administrative costs, as stated in the RFP. The FSRs were reviewed and approved by the DEED program manager each month. DEED staff monitored all fiscal expenditures, planned vs. actual, including administrative expenditures each month. Financial reconciliation of grantee expenditures was conducted according to the Department of Administration Office of Grants Management policy.

Each grant was monitored on site by DEED during the grant period to ensure that the use of funds was consistent with the approved plan and contract and the intent of the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant program.

Methods for Measuring Outcomes and Accomplishments of Grant Recipients

DEED developed the reporting requirements for the Youth Competitive Grantees to meet the requirements established in the legislation and to allow appropriate evaluation of the programs. Grantees submitted participant data on a quarterly basis and fiscal reports on a monthly basis. DEED staff reviewed all reports to ensure the expenditures and activities were in line with the agency’s approved budget and work plan.

The following data was collected on the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grants:

Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot Program Measures
Number served
Number receiving education or job training activities
Number receiving work experience activities
Number receiving community involvement and leadership development activities
Number receiving post-secondary exploration, career guidance and planning activities
Number receiving mentoring activities
Number receiving support services
Number attaining individual work readiness or education goals
Number receiving academic credit or service learning credit
Number obtaining high school diploma, obtaining a GED, remaining in school or dropouts returning to school
Number entering post-secondary education, vocational/occupational skills training, apprenticeship, military, job search or employment
Program completion rate
Customer satisfaction

A total of 9,435 youth were served through the SFY 2013 Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot Program. More detailed information on the characteristics of the youth served and the program outcomes for each of the grantees is available on the DEED website at <http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/index/grants/index.jsp>

Department Expenditures Related to the Administration and Monitoring of Grants

Costs incurred by DEED reflect staff costs and associated expenses for time spent on the development of the RFP, the review and selection process, contracting oversight, reporting and data collection, review of financial and program data, and on-site monitoring. For SFY 2013, administrative costs totaled \$142,400 (five percent of the appropriation).