



Community Planning and Economic Development Department News Release

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Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home ▫ Jobs & Economic Vitality ▫ Eco-Focused ▫

Livable Communities, Healthy Lives ▫ Many People, One Minneapolis ▫ A City That Works

More than 2,000 youth working this summer through City of Minneapolis employment programs

220 businesses employing youth and training tomorrow's workforce

June 21, 2011 (MINNEAPOLIS) –This week marks the first week of work for more than 2,000 youth, ages 14-21, at jobs through the City's STEP-UP youth employment program. Youth will be employed by 220 businesses, non-profit organizations, and government offices that are committed to hiring and training Minneapolis teens for the summer. Since 2002, more than 16,000 youth have been placed in summer jobs through City-funded programs.

The STEP-UP program significantly benefits low-income youth and youth of color. In 2010, 89% of youth placed in jobs were eligible for free or reduced school lunch, 8% were English Language Learners (ELL), and 90% were youth of color. Last year, each STEP-UP intern earned \$1,440 on average, for a total of \$1.9 million.

"We've promised Minneapolis youth that if you commit to your education and plan for your future, we will support you — that's the Minneapolis Promise, and we're delivering on that promise today," said **Mayor R.T. Rybak**. "I congratulate the youth who are taking advantage of STEP-UP, for taking responsibility for their future success. I also thank every business, non-profit and government office that has hired a STEP-UP intern for the summer. They know what I do: the Minneapolis youth who

cross cultural barriers every single day are the most valuable generation we've ever raised and are the key to our global competitiveness."

Youth in STEP-UP are also offered a variety of experiences to provide them a well-rounded training experience that extends beyond the job itself. STEP-UP internships not only include comprehensive work readiness training, but many youth also have opportunities to connect with a business mentor; attend camps, seminars, and college preparation workshops; and participate in classroom training that offered the chance to earn high school credit and keep academic skills sharp.

"This job is a great opportunity for me because it gives me a sense of what it's like to work as a professional in the healthcare field," said **Aqil Abdullahi**, a 2011 Roosevelt High School graduate who is working as a lab associate with Children's Hospitals and Clinics this summer. "I will get the opportunity to see how things work and what kind of education I need to reach my goals. I don't think I could find this kind of job without STEP-UP," added **Abdullahi**.

"Working with STEP-UP is a win-win for us, and it brings a new light and a whole new tier to the organization," said **Pat White**, Retention and Recruitment Strategist, Children's Hospitals and Clinics, who also serves as STEP-UP supervisor and coordinator. "You have that leverage of young people along with adults working together, and they bring such a bright attitude to the workplace. It's just great to see how interested they are in healthcare and in working," said White.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) provided \$50,000 to the program as part of its strategy to help employ, train and educate young people. The agency serves low-income and at-risk youth who may lack the skills that are critical for succeeding on the job.

"DEED's contribution will help 25 students gain valuable experience in the workplace this summer," said **DEED Commissioner Mark Phillips**. "This is an opportunity that will help young people build their resumes and become more competitive in the job market."

The City of Minneapolis operates the STEP-UP youth employment and training program in partnership with AchieveMpls, Minnesota Workforce Centers, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Project

for Pride in Living.

The STEP-UP youth employment program is one of the central components of the Minneapolis Promise, an innovative cluster of coordinated efforts designed to eliminate barriers to college for Minneapolis students. The Minneapolis Promise provides young people that commit to completing their education and plan for their future with counseling at the AchieveMpls Career and College Centers that are in all seven Minneapolis public high schools, high-quality summer jobs through STEP-UP, and financial assistance for college.

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