



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

Mayor celebrates wrap-up of 2011 STEP-UP summer jobs program with nearly 2,000 teens

Thanks companies for training region's future skilled workforce

August 15, 2011 (MINNEAPOLIS) – Mayor R.T. Rybak and nearly 2,000 youth, ages 14-21, employed through the City of Minneapolis STEP-UP program will celebrate the completion of their paid internships at 250 businesses and organizations throughout the city at a public event on Tuesday, August 16. The Mayor will also acknowledge the business community for its commitment to training the city's future workforce, particularly during economically challenging times. The event begins at 2:30 p.m. at Willey Hall, University of Minnesota, 225 19th Ave. S, Minneapolis.

“These talented young people gained valuable real-life work experience this summer and are a powerful pipeline of future skilled workers for Minnesota employers,” said **Mayor R.T. Rybak**.

“We’re now seeing more and more STEP-UP graduates finishing college and being hired back as professionals by the companies that first hired them as interns,” **Rybak** added. “This is one more way Minneapolis is helping to lead Minnesota’s economic recovery.”

Through a public-private partnership with local businesses and organizations, the STEP-UP program significantly benefits low-income youth and youth of color, helps them gain valuable work-readiness

skills and long-term professional skills, and connects them with business and community leaders. Since 2002, more than 16,000 youth have been placed in summer jobs through City-funded programs.

Keynote addresses will be given by **Mayor Rybak** and **STEP-UP Chair Richard Davis, U.S. Bancorp Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer**. **Matthew Vue**, an intern at Cargill and **Kong Xiong**, employed at the Minneapolis Workforce Center, will speak about their work and training experiences at Tuesday's event. **Hashim Yonis**, an alumnus of the STEP-UP program and School Administrative Manager at Wellstone International School, will also speak.

"STEP-UP changed my life," said **Hashim Yonis**. "I was born in Somalia and lived in the slums of Kenya and Ethiopia before coming to Minnesota. All the skills and tools I use today as a professional school administrator I first learned in my STEP-UP internships at Faegre & Benson law firm and the Minneapolis Public Works Department. STEP-UP also opened doors for me to attend one of the state's most prestigious colleges," he added.

Hennepin County, YWCA of Minneapolis and **Allianz** will receive awards for their commitment to hiring and training tomorrow's workforce. Hennepin County, one of STEP-UP's largest and longest-term partners, has hired over 360 interns since 2004 and is playing a key role in training the region's future public sector workforce. The YWCA of Minneapolis, a long-standing partner, has trained and hired more than 100 interns since the mid-nineties for jobs in its education and childcare programs. Allianz will be recognized for its commitment as one of the program's newest employers.

"STEP-UP gives high school students an opportunity to work in a corporate office environment and determine if this type of work inspires them," said **Carol MacDonald, Director, Strategic Sourcing and Procurement, Allianz**. "They learn discipline and rules in a business environment, and hopefully learn that we also have fun and build lasting friendships at work."

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