

Community Planning and Economic Development

News Release

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Minneapolis Youth Employment Program STEP-UP to Provide Job Interview Experience to Over 1,600 Youth

Over 400 Twin Cities Business Professionals to Provide One-on-One Mock Interviews with Youth at Minneapolis Convention Center April 13-16

Thursday, April 9, 2015 (Minneapolis) – April 13-16, over 1,600 Minneapolis youth and 400 Twin Cities business professionals will descend on the Minneapolis Convention Center for four nights for the annual STEP-UP youth employment program ‘Mock Interviews.’ Directed by AchieveMpls, these practice job interviews match professional business volunteers one-on-one with over 1,600 Minneapolis youth who are preparing for summer internships at top Twin Cities companies through the City’s STEP-UP youth employment program.

Interviews are scheduled from 4:45 - 6:15 pm each night at the Minneapolis Convention Center, Meeting Room 103, 1301 Second Avenue South. Interviewers include Richard Davis, STEP-UP co-chair and U.S. Bancorp Chair, President and CEO; Hilary Marden-Resnik, UCare Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer; and Rich Renikoff, Wells Fargo Regional Director and Senior Vice President.

“Preparing our young people for the workforce is something we are all responsible for,” said Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges. “The STEP-UP program is one way we are making sure these young people are in the picture of our workforce, which is crucial to the success of all of us. I want to thank all of the people who are making a personal commitment to help our kids succeed and ensuring that no genius is left on the table.”

“The time to think about tomorrow’s workforce is today. The STEP-UP program is one of the top initiatives in the country for preparing our students for tomorrow’s jobs,” said Todd Klingel, President and CEO, Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce. “By participating in the ‘Mock Interview’ process, you are not only providing a wonderful service to some incredibly courageous young people—you are also ensuring a bright future for our entire community.”

Founded in 2004, the City of Minneapolis STEP-UP youth employment program has created over 20,000 valuable workplace experiences for Minneapolis youth ages 14-21. Managed in partnership with AchieveMpls and with support from the Minnesota WorkForce Centers, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, and Project for Pride and Living (PPL), STEP-UP recruits, trains and places Minneapolis youth in jobs with a wide range of top Twin Cities businesses, nonprofits and public agencies, building a stronger future workforce for our knowledge-based regional economy. STEP-UP serves populations that face the greatest barriers to employment, particularly youth from low-income families, youth of color, youth from recent immigrant families, and youth with disabilities.

Prior to the ‘Mock Interviews,’ each STEP-UP program applicant completes 7-12 hours of work readiness training depending on their age and grade level. The trainings, directed by AchieveMpls and certified by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, are focused on developing 21st Century skills such as communication, problem solving, professional conduct, workplace ethics, interview skills, and resume writing.

In a bustling Minneapolis Convention Center hall, with their work readiness trainings completed, interns put their new skills to the test in what for many is their first professional job interview. Following the interview, business volunteers coach each STEP-UP intern, modeling professionalism and providing candid feedback to help interns strengthen their skills and confidence.

“This will be my third mock interview,” said Lulu B., a returning STEP-UP Achieve intern and aspiring doctor. “I really like connecting with the interviewers. They help me think about my strengths and challenges. They also help me prepare for the kind of professional work environment I should expect. It really feels like a real job interview with a professional company.”

The 400-plus business volunteers will include employees from Accenture, Allina Health, Ameriprise, Best Buy, Fraser, General Mills, Target, Thrivent, US Bank, Wells Fargo and several other businesses and organizations. Learn more about STEP-UP from the City of Minneapolis’ [website](#) or the [AchieveMpls website](#), or follow STEP-UP activities and events all year long on Twitter with hashtag #STEPUPMpls.

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