

Community Planning and Economic Development

Media Advisory

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1,600 City of Minneapolis STEP-UP Interns Started Their First Day of Work at 230 Local Companies and Nonprofits Today

Monday, June 15, 2015 (Minneapolis, MN) – The City of Minneapolis youth employment program, STEP-UP, kicked off its 12th summer today with 1,600 Minneapolis youth and young adults ages 14-21 starting their paid summer internships at 230 participating government agencies, nonprofits, and corporations throughout the Twin Cities metro area.

“Today the City of Minneapolis gained a whole lot of genius,” said Mayor Betsy Hodges. “Each and every one of our new interns has unique talents they bring to the table; we are so excited to have them join our team. In turn I hope they gain valuable skills and insight that will set them up for success in their professional careers.”

Created in 2004, STEP-UP serves Minneapolis youth and young adults who face some of the greatest barriers to employment, including youth from families of lower economic backgrounds, youth of color, and youth with disabilities. Since the program was launched, it has provided nearly 20,000 internship opportunities. STEP-UP interns explore diverse career interests, gain valuable on-the-job skills, make strong professional connections, and prepare for meaningful careers. Before being placed into their internship, most STEP-UP participants receive between 7-14 hours of work-readiness training and complete a mock-interview that prepares them for their experience.

Through three program options based on age and job training needs, STEP-UP can customize a placement opportunity for each youth. Youth with limited English speaking skills, special needs or limited work experience can build their skills through STEP-UP Explore or STEP-UP Discover internships. Older and more experienced interns can begin to build their professional resumes by working in government and private sector jobs as STEP-UP Achieve interns. STEP-UP Achieve is directed by [AchieveMpls](#) in partnership with the City of Minneapolis.

This year’s class of youth and young adult interns started work at their job sites today and will complete their internships on August 14. Participants’ workdays and experiences vary site to site; on average youth work from 20-32 hours per week. A job site supervisor and often times a

mentor guide the youth through the internship over the summer. Many times these relationships continue for months or years beyond the internship.

“Going into our third year as a STEP-UP employer, I'm excited to have an opportunity to make an impact in our community and especially in somebody's life,” said Tyler Olson, CEO of the Twin Cities marketing agency SMCpros. “I just had dinner with our first STEP-UP intern, Abram, and I'm so proud of him and where he's going in life. He recently won an AdFed 32under32 awards and he reached to me immediately afterwards thanking me for the opportunity to provide him with one of the best experiences he's had in his personal and professional life. That moment... that realization of the impact we make as employers... is priceless to me. I am going to try to have as many STEP-UP interns as I can effectively provide opportunities for, for as long as I can.”

STEP-UP interns gain more than job skills. Some of the other training interns receive is focused on problem solving, professionalism, interview skills, communication, and resume writing. Alyssa, a STEP-UP Achieve intern working at the Cleveland Neighborhood Association said, “In my three years in STEP-UP I've gained a much better understanding of myself and my future. I've been able to explore multiple possible jobs and see which ones I want to begin a career with. STEP-UP has also helped me with school by becoming a better student. It has encouraged me to pursue college after high school. Also I've gained skills that I could never gain in jobs that teenagers typically have. I look forward to developing more work skills this summer, building relationships with supervisors and peers, and growing my networking skills.” This summer Alyssa will be working as a Street Forum Ambassador for the organization, where she will be shooting video interviews of North Minneapolis residents.

At the close of the program, a graduation celebration will be held for all the interns, supervisors and other program supporters on August 14 at the Guthrie Theater. This year's event is themed “Jobs Today, Skills for Life.” To learn more about STEP-UP visit [here](#). If you are interested in interviewing an intern or touring a job site to meet a supervisor and intern, please contact [Rose Lindsay](#) at 612.676.5015.

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