

Community Planning and Economic Development

News Release

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Minneapolis Youth Employment Program STEP-UP to Provide Job Interview Experience to Over 1,700 Youth

Over 400 Twin Cities Business Professionals to Provide One-on-One Interviews and Feedback to Youth at Minneapolis Convention Center April 11-14

Thursday, April 7, 2016 (Minneapolis) – Next Monday-Thursday, April 11-14, over 1,700 Minneapolis youth and 400 Twin Cities business professionals will descend on the Minneapolis Convention Center for four nights for the 13th Annual STEP-UP youth employment program ‘mock job interviews.’ Organized by City of Minneapolis STEP-UP partner organization AchieveMpls, the mock interviews match the professional business volunteers one-on-one with the over 1,700 Minneapolis youth who are preparing for summer internships at top Twin Cities companies through STEP-UP.

“Preparing our young people for the workforce is an investment in our collective future,” said Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges. “The STEP-UP program is one way we are making sure no genius is left on the table. I want to thank all of the people who are making a personal commitment to get our kids ready by providing real experience and professional mentorship through STEP-UP.”

Interviews are scheduled from 4:45 - 6:15 p.m. each night at the Minneapolis Convention Center (Meeting Room 103, 1301 Second Avenue South). Interviewers include John Stanoch, Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce Interim President and CEO; Hilary Marden-Resnik, UCare Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer; Ron Zweber, Bremer Bank Senior Vice President; Rosemary Sundin, Orman Guidance President; Patricia Neal, Heartland, Inc. President; and other top Twin Cities business leaders.

“The mock Interviews provide a safe opportunity for interns to practice formal networking and interview skills, and real life experience in how to prepare, dress and act in an interview,” says Laura Beeth, System Director for Talent Acquisition at Fairview Health Services, a long-time STEP-UP employer. “For volunteers, it’s a great opportunity to share knowledge and assist our city’s young talent. The mock interviews can also strengthen STEP-UP employers’ commitment to the program, because we get to actually meet the wide range of students we’ll be serving – our future workforce.”

Founded in 2004, the City of Minneapolis STEP-UP youth employment program has created over 21,000 valuable workplace experiences for Minneapolis youth ages 14-21. Managed in partnership with AchieveMpls 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 7-14 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 professional communication, problem solving, professionalism, interview skills, and resume writing.

The mock interviews allow interns to put their new skills to the test in what for many, is their first professional job interview. The interviews last about 15 minutes. Following, the professional volunteers have the opportunity to coach each STEP-UP intern, modeling professional communication by providing respectful, candid feedback to help interns strengthen their skills and confidence.

“The mock interviews were one of the most important parts of my work readiness training,” says Ayub, a returning STEP-UP Achieve intern who has worked at Xcel Energy. “They gave me a sense of how an actual interview goes and helped me learn how to relax and explain myself in a stressful situation. They also allowed me to put the new skills I’d learned to the test—skills such as proper etiquette, communication in the workplace, proper attire for work and more. The constructive feedback I received allowed me to improve my communication skills, which are required to get a great job!”

The 400-plus volunteers will include employees from 132 Twin Cities companies, nonprofits and public agencies, including Hennepin County (46 volunteers), Accenture (37 volunteers), Capella University (23 volunteers), U.S. Bank (15 volunteers), University of Minnesota (13 volunteers), Target (11 volunteers), Minneapolis Public Schools (10 volunteers), Wells Fargo (8 volunteers), and Xcel Energy (7 volunteers).

Learn more about STEP-UP from the City of Minneapolis’ [website](#) or follow STEP-UP activities and events all year long on social media with hashtag #STEPUPMpls.