

Sports authority announces partnership to ensure minorities and women workforce equity

Written by



The Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA) announced Thursday that it has chosen Summit Academy OIC and its community partners to serve as the Employment Assistance Firm (EAF) for the construction of the Minnesota Vikings stadium. The group will identify qualified workers, provide training and placement, and offer quality assurance to ensure the project employs a highly-skilled diverse workforce.

"We are committed to having the people of Minnesota build the 'People's Stadium'," said Louis King, president of Summit Academy OIC. "This is truly a unique collaborative effort that brings together a strong team of 17 community partners to recruit, hire and train minorities, women and veterans. We applaud MSFA for supporting this process."

The MSFA has committed to meet the state-mandated goals of employing 32 percent minorities and six percent women on the construction of the Vikings stadium. The organization also has taken the unprecedented step of investing \$700,000 to develop the workforce.

"The MSFA is proud to contract with the Employment Assistance Firm "EAF" – Summit Academy OIC," said MSFA Equity Director Alex Tittle. "We are excited that the collaboration of groups will serve as a resource that will assist us in delivering a workforce that reflects the Twin Cities demographics. We are also proud to announce that MA Mortenson/Thor, Summit Academy and MSFA are working diligently to connect the workforce needs with the project."



Summit Academy OIC will lead a coalition of local organizations in education, construction training and organized labor that will assist with recruitment and outreach, provide construction-related training and facilitate job placement. In addition, a comprehensive database will be developed to capture existing and new minority, female and veteran workers, and make their data available to employers working on the project.



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"MCTC and Saint Paul College are pleased to be the lead higher education partners for this project," said Mike Christenson, Associate Vice President of Workforce Development at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. "This is an unprecedented agreement that will create clear construction pathways for students of color."

Demographic estimates show that by 2040, people of color will represent nearly 45 percent of the Twin Cities' population. In addition to providing a diverse workforce for the Vikings stadium, this effort has the potential to meet the workforce needs for future construction projects in Minnesota while also enabling individuals from disadvantaged communities to become self-sufficient.

"We are pleased that the MSFA is supporting our efforts to ensure that the people working on the new stadium reflect the diverse population of the city," said Al Flowers, community organizer. "This is an exciting time for Minneapolis and we look forward to working together on this historic project."

Summit Academy OIC also will work with HIRE Minnesota to ensure public transparency and accountability throughout the project.

"The EAF is a groundbreaking collaboration bringing together community-based groups and other organizations within the construction work system," said Avi Viswanathan, HIRE Minnesota Campaign Director. "After years of watching state-funded projects fail to meet hiring goals, the EAF partners came together with a positive vision to increase the number of people of color, women, and veterans in the workforce. We're proud to be part of this coalition that has stuck together these months and kept fighting until we got the needed investment in our communities."

The following organizations will participate in the project:

Outreach/Identification of qualified workers and potential candidates

- Azule Staffing
- Community Standards Initiative (CSI)
- District Councils Collaborative
- Latino Economic Development Corporation
- Little Earth Housing Development
- Minnesota Workforce Council Association
- Neighborhoods Organizing for Change
- Somali Education and Social Advocacy Center (SESAC)
- Stairstep/His Works United
- Veterans Small Business Foundation

Training

- Better Futures
- Merrick Community Services
- Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC)

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- Minneapolis Urban League
- St. Paul College
- Summit Academy OIC
- YWCA St. Paul