

Minneapolis STEP-UP Youth Employment program celebrates 10 years and 18,000 internships

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On Thursday, August 15 the City of Minneapolis STEP-UP program celebrated 10 years of providing summer internship opportunities to Minneapolis youth in partnership with AchieveMpls and the Minneapolis WorkForce Centers. Since 2004, youth ages 14-21 have received nearly 18,000 internships and over 230 Twin Cities' employers have participated in the STEP-UP program.

The celebration included brief comments from Mayor Rybak, Congressman Ellison, U.S. Bank Chair, President, and CEO Richard Davis, and Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce President Todd Klingel. The 30 employers who have supported STEP-UP since its creation in 2004 by providing intern work experiences were also recognized during the event. Entertainment featuring STEP-UP interns was provided by High School for Recording Arts and Lundstrum Center for the Performing Arts.



"STEP-UP is America's most successful youth-jobs program today, but it is much more," said Mayor Rybak. "By creating the highly trained, skilled, and diverse workforce that we need, it is

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our region's guarantee that we will be economically competitive on a global scale well into the future."

STEP-UP is one of the country's premier youth employment programs. In 2012, the program received accolades from President Obama at a White House Summit on Youth Employment. Private sector employer engagement is the hallmark of STEP-UP, with over 150 top Twin Cities businesses, nonprofits and public agencies stepping up this summer to hire interns. Last year, STEP-UP interns brought home \$3.1 million in wages to low-income households, including \$1.4 million from the private sector.



"Through our participation in STEP-UP, we provide training and experience to help youth gain the skills and connections for success in life, education, and future employment. Youth learn what is expected from an employer, the program offers them an avenue to receive a wage and experience while providing valuable services for MPHA," said Cora McCorvey, Executive Director/CEO Minnesota Public Housing Authority (MPHA)/STEP-UP 10 Year Employer. "Even though hosting a summer youth requires an investment of our time, the youth also contribute to MPHA as we work to maintain our services in this time of doing more with less."

STEP-UP provided summer jobs for 1,800 Minneapolis youth this summer through its three program options, including STEP-UP Explore, STEP-UP Discover, and STEP-UP Achieve. All interns from STEP-UP Discover and STEP-UP Achieve participated in job training and received a work-readiness certification by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce prior to receiving their work placement.

This year's graduating STEP-UP intern class is one of the most diverse groups of program participants to date with 93% of program participants youth of color, 20% born outside of the United States, and 15% youth with disabilities.