
Sponsor: Workforce Solutions

Meeting Date: 3/14/2023

Title: 2023 Unified Local Youth Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Minnesota Youth Program

File Number: 2023-098

Background and Rationale:

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions operates youth employment services programs for low-income and at-risk youth, ages 14-24, which are funded by state and federal grant allocations. Each year, Workforce Solutions is required to submit an updated Unified Local Youth Plan (Plan) to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners and the Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) must approve the Plan.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) continue to build momentum in career pathways partnerships, employer engagement activities and strategies for improved service delivery and participant outcomes. The service delivery model employed by Workforce Solutions is a federated model that focuses on sharing and partnering with community organizations, education providers, and employers with the goal of community alignment to eliminate economic, educational, and income disparities.

In late 2021, Workforce Solutions released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Youth Employment Services funded through WIOA and MYP. Workforce Solutions received 30 responses from organizations seeking to provide these services. On April 1, 2022, Workforce Solutions began providing Youth and Young Adult Employment Services through agreements with 10 organizations: Hired, Face to Face, Goodwill Easter-Seals of MN, Change Inc., Hmong American Partnership, Youthprise, Restoration for All, Inc., Tree Trust, Urban Boat Builders, and 30,000 Feet. Although these agreements will remain in place through June 30, 2027, Workforce Solutions will amend contracts on an annual basis to allocate new DEED-distributed funds.

The Unified Local Youth Plan for the Program Year 2023 (April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024) and the State Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) is due to DEED on April 14, 2023. The Plan reflects recommendations, updates adopted and approval by the WIB Youth Committee on January 19, 2023, and the full WIB on February 2, 2023.

Funds for the upcoming program year have not yet been determined due to delays of information from the U.S. Department of Labor to DEED. Because of this delay, DEED has not included budget forms in this annual plan. Once allocation amounts are provided, DEED will provide budget templates and Workforce Solutions will submit a budget to DEED for approval. Similarly, DEED is still in the process of negotiating Minnesota's federal performance outcome benchmarks for WIOA Program Year 2023. Because this process is not complete, DEED has granted all Workforce Development Areas the ability to submit their own revised performance goals which will be negotiated with DEED at a future date. Nonetheless, since Ramsey County has kept pace with or exceeded the performance levels of peer Workforce Development Areas in the Twin Cities (Hennepin-Carver County and the city of Minneapolis) under previously negotiated benchmarks, Workforce Solutions is not proposing changes to those established in 2022.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the submission of the 2023 Unified Local Youth Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth and Minnesota Youth Program.
2. Authorize the County Manager to apply for and accept youth program funds once funds become available from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.
3. Authorize the County Manager to execute the grant agreement.
4. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and amendments to agreements in accordance with the county's procurement policies and procedures, provided the amounts are within the limits of the grant funding.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Xiong, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt.
Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: MatasCastillo, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

Absent: - 1: Frethem

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board