

Request for Board Action Details

File #:	2023-098	Status:	Passed
Type:	Administrative Item	In control:	Board of Commissioners
On agenda:	3/14/2023	Final action:	3/14/2023
Title:	2023 Unified Local Youth Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Minnesota Youth Program		
Sponsors:	Workforce Solutions		
Indexes:			
Code sections:			
Attachments:	1. Unified Local Youth Plan PY2023 WIOA Youth Formula Funds SFY2024 Minnesota Youth Programs (MYP), 2. Resolution		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
3/14/2023	1	Board of Commissioners	approved	Pass

Sponsor: Workforce Solutions

Title

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

Recommendation

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.

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.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being

☒ Prosperity

☒ Opportunity

☐ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

The action to submit the Plan and accept related funding has the potential to positively impact racial equity through increased opportunities for education and employment of Ramsey County young people, including those who are racially and ethnically diverse, ages 14-24, improving their outlook for greater short- and long-term economic wellness and independence. During the previous program year, 88% of young people served identified as a race other than white and all faced at least one barrier to obtaining employment in the open market.

Additionally, labor market information has shown Workforce Solutions that the detrimental economic impacts of COVID-19, including job loss, reduction in hours, and educational disruption, has disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous and racially and ethnically diverse communities, young people ages 14-35, and individuals with a high school diploma or less formal educational attainment. This data informed the development of the RFPs released in November 2021 and the selection of the 10 contractors that have provided Workforce Solutions' Youth and Young Adult services since April 2022. These services are provided to reduce barriers to work and provide pathways to careers through occupational education/training to reduce racial economic disparities in Ramsey County communities.

Ramsey County is investing in the future of the local workforce and business community by creating a more inclusive economy with diverse future workers, business owners, and leaders. As stated in the county's Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan, Ramsey County is a place as rich in cultural vitality as it is rich in economic opportunity. Wage disparities across racial lines have stymied economic growth and created affordability and livability challenges for individuals and families. A renewed and targeted focus on job access, skills training, and high-wage industry growth, coupled with intentional efforts to dismantle institutional racism, will create numerous, efficacious pathways for Ramsey County's most disadvantaged residents. Moreover, this focus has the potential to close stagnant racial income and wealth gaps while simultaneously accelerating economic growth in Ramsey County as the community recovers from COVID-19.

Community Participation Level and Impact

The Plan was developed with input from Workforce Solutions staff, WIB Youth Committee members and meeting attendees, WIB members, including representatives from community-based organizations, private sector employers, public agencies, and a young person hired from Ramsey County's Youth Advisory Council. The plan is reviewed by the WIB Youth Committee, WIB Executive Committee, and approved by the full WIB before being brought to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners for final comments and approval.

Additionally, Workforce Solutions has incorporated input from a number of community engagement activities and events. First, Ramsey County gathered information both from community members and community-based organizations during the evaluation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security program in 2020. In 2021, and in partnership with Bridgemakers, a youth-led organization, Workforce Solutions held a series of focus groups with young people. Out of that process, feedback included increased coordination across multiple systems (county, city, schools, etc.). Since then, Workforce Solutions has been working with a variety of working groups around issues such as youth homelessness, employer needs, schools and more. The information provided by these groups is that young people need additional, adaptive, and culturally specific training opportunities to develop both their professional and occupational skills.

Finally, Workforce Solutions completed several direct engagements with young people over the last few months, including a program satisfaction survey distributed to youth participants and focused conversations with the Youth Advisory Council. These engagements were designed by youth and conversations were led by youth. The feedback provided in these engagements directly informed the development of new youth-focused initiatives to begin this year, as they have been outlined in the Plan.

☒ Inform ☒ Consult ☒ Involve ☒ Collaborate ☒ Empower

Fiscal Impact

DEED allocations covered in the Plan are both federal and state funded employment and training grants. Funds for the upcoming program year have not yet been determined based on the timeline of funds from the U.S. Department of Labor to DEED. Based on ongoing discussions at the federal and state levels, Workforce Solutions' annual WIOA and MYP allocations are anticipated to increase in 2023 over the 2022 allocation of \$1,111,096 in WIOA funds and \$472,082 in MYP funds.

Due to the delay in determining WIOA and MYP allocations, DEED has asked local Workforce Development Boards to submit the Plan without the budget information. Once new allocations are received, Workforce Solutions will complete a new budget modification and submit to DEED for approval. At this time, Workforce Solutions will also submit a memo to the County Board, outlining new award amounts and contract allocations. Programs are maintained within the allocated grants and have no net fiscal change impact to Workforce Solutions as estimations of grant awards are included in the biennial budget process

Last Previous Action

On April 26, 2022, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approved the Program Year 2022 Unified Local Youth Plan (Resolution B2022-107).

Attachments

1. Unified Local Youth Plan PY2023 WIOA Youth Formula Funds SFY2024 Minnesota Youth Programs (MYP)