

Community Planning and Economic Development

Media Advisory

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1,700 STEP-UP Interns Start Their First Day of Work at Over 230 Local Companies and Nonprofits on Monday

Friday, June 16, 2017 (Minneapolis, MN) – This Monday, June 19, over 1,700 Minneapolis youth and young adults ages 14-21 will start their first day of work as STEP-UP interns at over 230 participating companies, government agencies and nonprofits throughout the Twin Cities metro area.

“Monday will be an exciting day throughout our city, one that employers and STEP-UP interns alike look forward to each year,” said Mayor Betsy Hodges. “We know that the work experience gained and the training received this summer will help prepare these young people to be leaders in our economy and our community in the future. Congratulations and best wishes to those interns beginning work, and thanks to the 230 employers who are making this summer’s program possible.”

Created in 2004 as a program of the City of Minneapolis, STEP-UP serves youth and young adults who face some of the greatest barriers to employment, including youth from families of lower economic backgrounds, youth of color, and youth with disabilities. Since the program was launched, it has provided over 23,000 internship opportunities. STEP-UP is managed in partnership with AchieveMpls with support from Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and Project for Pride in Living.

STEP-UP interns explore diverse career interests, gain valuable on-the-job skills, make strong professional connections, and prepare for meaningful careers. Before being placed into their internship, STEP-UP participants participate in work-readiness training and complete a mock job interview that prepares them for their experience.

STEP-UP intentionally places youth based on age, experience and job training needs. Younger youth age 14-15 with limited work experience can build their skills through STEP-UP Discover internships. Older interns age 16-21 can begin to build their professional resumes by working in career oriented business, government and nonprofit jobs as STEP-UP Achieve interns. Many

interns return to the program for a second or third year to explore new career opportunities or deepen their experience in specific fields.

Participants' workdays and experiences vary site to site. On average, youth work between 20-32 hours per week. Youth are supported during their internships by supervisors or worksite mentors who help them build their professional skills, navigate the workplace and connect with additional resources and opportunities. Many times these relationships continue for months or years beyond the internship.

This summer, long-time STEP-UP employer Accenture is increasing the number of internships it offers from two to eight. "Our STEP-UP interns are a window to our future workforce here at Accenture and in the Twin Cities," said Scott Cummings, Minnesota Market Lead for Accenture. "It's exciting to see their enthusiasm, as well as the diversity of talents and life experiences they bring to the table."

STEP-UP interns gain more than specific job skills. They also learn about problem solving, professionalism, interview skills, communication, and resume writing. Industry-specific trainings help interns deepen and integrate career exposure with post-secondary education and career planning.

"STEP-UP helped me learn what is expected of me in a professional work environment," says Jenny, a former STEP-UP Achieve intern at Siemens and Hennepin County. "My internship opened my eyes to the many career paths out there, and the people I met gave me valuable advice about important steps I should take in college. It's also given me motivation to pursue other opportunities. I'm glad I took the chance to be part of STEP-UP!"

At the close of the program, a celebration is held for all interns, supervisors, mentors, and program supporters at the Guthrie Theater. The celebration will honor outstanding interns, supervisors, and employers. To learn more about STEP-UP, visit the program's [website](#) or follow STEP-UP on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or by using hashtag #STEPUPMpls. If you are interested in touring a job site to meet a supervisor and intern, please contact [Rose Lindsay](#) at 612.676.5015.

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