

Community Planning and Economic Development

News Release

Contacts: Rose Lindsay, CPED Communications, 612.673.5015
Jane Austin, Marketing Director AchieveMpls, 612.455.1564

Minneapolis Youth Employment Program STEP-UP to Provide Job Interview Experience to Over 1,700 Youth

Over 400 Twin Cities Business Professionals and Community Volunteers to Provide One-on-One Interviews and Feedback to Youth at Minneapolis Convention Center April 10-13
During STEP-UP Mock Interviews

Friday, April 7, 2017 (Minneapolis) – Next Monday-Thursday, April 10-13, over 1,700 Minneapolis youth and 400 Twin Cities business professionals and community volunteers will descend on the Minneapolis Convention Center for four nights for the 14th Annual STEP-UP youth employment program *Mock Interviews*. Organized by City of Minneapolis STEP-UP partner organization AchieveMpls, these practice interviews match youth who are preparing for summer internships at top Twin Cities organizations with experienced professionals and community volunteers eager to share their skills and expertise with the future of the workforce.

“It is great to see our diversity represented in the STEP-UP interns each year with hundreds of talented future leaders paving the road for a more prosperous Minneapolis,” said Mayor Betsy Hodges. “The future of our city is in the hands of our youth, and the time and resources we invest today in them is crucial for sustaining our growth. Thank you to all the volunteers that have taken the time out of their day to help prepare tomorrow’s workforce.”

The *Mock Interviews* are scheduled from 4:45 - 6:15 p.m. each night at the Minneapolis Convention Center (Room 103, 1301 Second Avenue South). The 400-plus volunteers will include employees from over 130 Twin Cities companies, nonprofits and public agencies, including Target (53), Workday Foundation (50), U.S. Bank (36), Wells Fargo (36), Best Buy (34), Xcel Energy (33), and Accenture (23).

Prior to the interviews, each STEP-UP program applicant completes 7-14 hours of work readiness training depending on their age and program level. The trainings, directed by AchieveMpls and certified by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, focus on workplace behavior, professional communication, problem solving, professionalism, interview skills, resume writing, and other skills.

“The annual STEP-UP *Mock Interviews* are invaluable for interns by providing an opportunity to build their confidence and apply what they’ve learned about the interview process in a real-life scenario,” says Katie Petersen, Bremer Bank Senior Human Resources Manager and a STEP-UP Achieve supervisor. “They’re also an excellent way to connect STEP-UP interns with potential employers in the community. In addition, it’s very satisfying for our Bremer Bank volunteers to help these hardworking, eager-to-learn students hone their interview skills by providing helpful feedback and encouragement.”

The *Mock Interviews* allow interns to put their new skills to the test in what for many, is their first professional job interview. The interviews last about 15 minutes. Following, the volunteers coach each STEP-UP intern, modeling professional communication by providing respectful, candid feedback to help them strengthen their skills and confidence.

“I’m so thankful for each and every person who has made STEP-UP so amazing,” said STEP-UP intern Hafsa Hassan. “It has changed my life. STEP-UP is helping build bright futures for the leaders of tomorrow and I would love to be a mentor one day and help others students get the best of this experience.”

Founded in 2004, the City of Minneapolis STEP-UP youth employment program has created over 24,000 valuable workplace experiences for Minneapolis youth ages 14-21. Managed in partnership with AchieveMpls with support from the Minnesota WorkForce Centers, and Project for Pride and Living (PPL), STEP-UP recruits, trains and places Minneapolis youth in jobs with a wide range of top Twin Cities businesses, nonprofits and public agencies, building a stronger future workforce for our knowledge-based regional economy. STEP-UP serves populations that face the greatest barriers to employment, particularly youth from low-income families, youth of color, youth from recent immigrant families, and youth with disabilities.

Learn more about STEP-UP on the City of Minneapolis’ [website](#) or follow STEP-UP activities and events all year long via @STEPUPMpls on Facebook, Instagram or with hashtag #STEPUPMpls.

###