

The Minneapolis Promise

MWCA Best Practices

WIB Name/WSA: Minneapolis Employment and Training Program
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If you go to school, if you work hard, if you develop a life plan and if you graduate, we will get you the counseling you need to plan your future, help you find a summer job and help you get the funding you need to go to college. – Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak

On March 15, 2007, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak spoke to an auditorium of Roosevelt High School ninth grade students on the importance of planning for their future and pledged to them that the City of Minneapolis would help them succeed if they did their part. That speech at Roosevelt introduced one of many efforts Mayor Rybak has undertaken to promote ***The Minneapolis Promise*** initiative that coordinates summer jobs; career and college counseling; and college financial assistance for all Minneapolis public high school students.

The Minneapolis Promise helps to prepare the next generation to become Minnesota's future, well-educated and highly skilled workforce. This innovative approach, that brings together the City of Minneapolis; Achieve Minneapolis; the Minneapolis Community and Technical College; and Saint Paul College, offers Minneapolis youth a clear pathway to summer employment opportunities; career and college counseling; and access to higher education through the Power of YOU. ***The Minneapolis Promise*** offers youth three very important tools to help them create a bright future.

Component #1 - STEP-UP summer jobs program

STEP-UP for youth ages 14 to 15 is a nine-week, subsidized summer jobs program for low-income Minneapolis youth. Operated by the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program, this program introduces students to good work habits and provides them with wages and an opportunity to contribute to a local community-based organization. Participants may:

1. Work 30 hours a week from mid-June to mid-August;
2. Earn \$6.15 per hour at a job such as a landscaper, tutor, childcare worker, computer support intern, clerical assistant, peer educator, camp counselor or maintenance worker;
3. Earn high school credit by attending C.L.A.S.S. (Center for Learning Academic and Survival Skills);
4. Take part in a business mentoring program or spend a week, for free, at a multi-cultural camp called Camp Sunrise;
5. Learn new skills on the job; and
6. Provide valuable services at a local public or non-profit agency.

STEP-UP for youth ages 16 to 21 is a six- to ten-week unsubsidized summer jobs program for Minneapolis youth. Operated by the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program through a contract with Achieve Minneapolis, this program provides youth with paid positions with local employers that teach them the skills they need to succeed on the job. Participants:

1. Work part-time or full-time (20-40 hours per week) from mid-June through August;
2. Earn \$7 to more than \$10 per hour in a field that interests them: business, health care, creative arts and many other areas;
3. Explore career interests and gain job skills in a professional setting; and
4. Make future connections with top Minneapolis employers.

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Component #2 - Achieve Career and College Centers

The purpose of the Achieve Career and College Centers is to ensure that all Minneapolis Public School high school students and a growing number of Alternative School students plan for their future success. The centers work with Minneapolis Public Schools administrators, counselors and teachers to build a system that:

1. Coordinates with and builds on existing school, government, and community-based programs;
2. Requires students to have a life plan as a condition of their high school graduation;
3. Provides career exploration and career readiness activities including interest assessments, career fairs, job shadows, and work readiness certification;
4. Provides college exploration and application assistance, including ACT/SAT test preparation, college fairs, and college and financial aid application processes;
5. Provides advising, coaching and mentoring from school guidance counselors, career and college center coordinators, business and community mentors and volunteers to assist students in making informed choices about career and college plans; and
6. Includes technology, information and dedicated staff to support students.

The Achieve Career and College Initiative is:

- Centrally managed by Achieve Minneapolis, including staff management;
- Autonomous from the schools and district, but integrated into the school and curriculum; and
- Funded by private sources.

Component #3 - The Power of YOU

The Power of YOU is a college scholarship program designed to put the dream to attend college within reach. The program covers the cost of tuition and fees for two years or up to 72 credits at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), Saint Paul College, and Metropolitan State through state and federal grants and private scholarships. The Power of YOU supports as many students as possible based on student need and funds available for the program.

The eligibility requirements for Minneapolis students are:

1. Graduate from a Minneapolis or Saint Paul public high school;
2. Reside in the city of Minneapolis or St. Paul;
3. Meet the criteria to apply for federal financial aid; and
4. Meet the MCTC, St. Paul College, or Metropolitan State admission requirements.

The framework of the three components of *The Minneapolis Promise* is easily replicable. The current structure brings together the funding resources from multiple independent youth-serving organizations with no need for budget increases to support this collaborative effort. Each of the entities is responsible for their own program, fundraising, and staffing. Promotion of *The Minneapolis Promise* is accomplished through common messages from all partners.

The Minneapolis Promise is based on the simple premise that if Minneapolis youth are given an opportunity, they will seize it and succeed. While the premise is simple, the implementation of this promise requires multiple entities with a shared vision to operate cooperatively for Minneapolis youth to be supported in their college and career goals.