



MWCA Best Practices

SUBMISSION FORM

WIB Name/WSA : **Workforce Service Area 10**

Submitted by: **Deb Bahr-Helgen**

Attach a description (no more than two pages) describing the innovative best practice.

Please address the following:

- Overview describing the innovative best practice
- Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- Ideas for replication/lessons learned

Information can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to:

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DUE DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2009

City of Minneapolis STEP-UP Work Readiness Training

Overview and Collaboration

The City of Minneapolis STEP-UP Summer Jobs Program provides a well rounded employment experience for youth ages 14-21 in Minneapolis. Striving to go beyond the typical summer job, STEP-UP includes a critical work readiness training to provide a more comprehensive training experience for our youth and thereby a better employee for our community partners and employers. The work readiness training is essential to preparing youth for work, teaching the skills needed to smoothly enter the workforce, and helping youth make the most of their STEP-UP experience.

The work readiness training was implemented in response to feedback from employers regarding the level of skills that youth were bringing to their workplace. While some youth came prepared with basic employability skills, others struggled with the fundamentals required on the job. In collaboration with the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, the basic skills required of youth in the workforce were identified and a curriculum was designed by AchieveMpls, a local nonprofit, to prepare youth with these essential skills. AchieveMpls, under contract with the City of Minneapolis' STEP-UP Program, delivers the curriculum and Minneapolis Public Schools and the Minneapolis Community and Technical College donate space for the trainings.

Youth that complete the work readiness training, in combination with the summer work experience now receive a Work Readiness Credential approved by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber views this as a tool that their members can use to identify qualified job candidates, and the youth can use to add value to their resume.

Job Seeker Impact

The work readiness training occurs during three two-hour classroom sessions. Recognizing that youth are at different developmental stages, two curriculums were designed. One focuses on the younger youth (ages 14 and 15) that may be involved in their first work experience, and one focuses on youth ages 16-21 that may already have some work experience. A third, abbreviated curriculum is delivered to youth that are in the STEP-UP Program for a second year. Youth ages 16-21 also participate in a mock interview session with a local business professional. Many of the youth respond that this is the component of training that they find most valuable and prepares them the most for future professional endeavors.

Attendance at all of the STEP-UP work readiness trainings is a requirement for continued participation in the program. Youth that do not attend all required training sessions are removed from the applicant pool.

Each youth that completes work readiness training fills out a survey to giving feedback about their classroom experience. As a result of the work readiness training:

- 97% of youth said they are aware of their skills and strengths
- 94% said they were comfortable answering the most common interview questions
- 97% responded that they know what is expected of them in a professional work environment
- 96% reported that they know how to communicate in a professional setting

Work readiness training includes the following:

- Identifying Skills
- Customer service
- Professional dress
- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Job search
- Resume development
- Interviewing
- Understanding workplace culture
- Networking

Community Impact

Supervisors and employers in the program have commented positively on the level of skill the youth bring to the job after the additional of work readiness training. Supervisors that have been with the program for many years prior to the incorporation of the work readiness training, comment that the youth that have gone through the training demonstrate improved ability to understand basic employer expectations, require less re-direction, have improved communication skills, and have a better attendance record.

Replication

The curriculum is easily replicable and, in fact, portions of the work readiness curriculum are in use, with permission, in “The Youth Zone” at the South Minneapolis Workforce Center. While the curriculum is best used in its entirety, pieces can be used independently for specific training needs.