



## MWCA Promising Practices

### SUBMISSION FORM

WDB Name/WDA \_\_\_Minneapolis WDB #10\_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_Deb Bahr-Helgen, Director\_\_\_\_\_

**Attach a description (no more than two pages) describing the innovative practice.  
Please address the following points:**

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

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***DUE DATE: Tuesday, July 31, 2018***

<b>Criteria for Selection of Outstanding Practices</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>
Overview describing the innovative best practice	20
Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)	20
Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)	20
Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	15
Ability for use or replication by others	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

Program/Initiative Title: **Step Up Academic Credit Alignment Project**  
WDA Name: **Minneapolis WDA #10**

**Overview describing the innovative practice**

The City of Minneapolis Employment and Training's Step Up program prepares Minneapolis youth for tomorrow's careers. As one of the country's leading youth employment programs, Step Up recruits, trains and places more than 1,600 young people (ages 14-21) in paid internships at more than 200 employers each year. With a collective of partners spanning 15 industries and multiple sectors, Step Up is the largest and most enduring program of its kind in our region. It's a backbone of support that unites businesses, schools, nonprofits and the city together in a common goal: to build and strengthen our future economy and the talented youth who will power it.

Step Up participants face some of the greatest barriers to employment, particularly youth from low income families, youth of color, youth from immigrant families, and youth with disabilities. Some of these youth are at risk of not graduating high school on time, if at all. High school graduation is crucial to career pathways that pay family-sustaining wages. In high schools, significant racial disparities and achievement gaps persist across all of Minneapolis: while 67% of white students graduate on time, just 22% American Indian, 34% Hispanic, and 36% Black students do (2016 data). Moreover, data show that students who are credit-deficient by ninth grade graduate on time at significantly lower rates.

To address the racial and economic disparities of high school graduation rates, the City of Minneapolis has worked in close partnership with Project for Pride in Living (PPL), a community-based organization, to realign Step Up work readiness training curriculum to correspond with the Minneapolis Public School (MPS) Career Readiness Seminar (CRS), a prerequisite course to earn academic credit for work-based learning.

Now, interns who are over 16 years old and who are in high school will earn high school credit through PPL's Loring Nicollet Alternative School (an MPS contract alternative high school). This pioneering approach allows Step Up interns the option to earn high school credits for their work experiences in any job – Step Up or otherwise – once they earn this prerequisite credit.

Additionally, the City of Minneapolis has partnered directly with the MPS credit recovery team to pilot a project this summer with Step Up interns to empower youth to earn academic elective credits that help them progress toward high school graduation. A small cohort of 9th grade Step Up interns who are currently not on track to graduate high school on time are attending a required class, in coordination with their Step Up internship, so they can get closer to on track when starting 10th grade in the fall. The curriculum was designed specifically for Step Up interns and includes components of their summer jobs as part of their learning.

**Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)**

In 2018, 550 Step Up participants were eligible to receive career readiness seminar credits, and 400 students (73%) have completed the requirements to earn academic credits.

Step Up is more than a job; it's a way forward. We're building a springboard to connect youth to the people and places that will get them where they want to be. Step Up provides a chance for young people to be daring, explore careers and create a vision for the future alongside professional mentors who can guide them. Interns get their first job, and then a second. They gain real-world knowledge, broaden their networks and get a foot in the door at life-changing careers.

Step Up's two credit integration projects not only support youth who may be credit deficient to earn credits, but they also foster deeper connections between an intern's work experience and how it connects back to his or her education. The standards associated with the credit help to contextualize academic skills in the professional

sphere; exploring appropriate communication techniques in the workplace and nurture multi-step approaches to problem solving. This career readiness credit is critical to allowing youth the opportunity to earn further credits for their work experiences within or outside of Step Up. By building a system where youth receive work-based academic credit, we reinforce the important connections between career aspirations and academic success.

### **Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)**

According to data published by RealTime Talent and MSPWin, Minnesota's metropolitan region is expected to face a workforce shortage of nearly 62,250 workers by 2020. And according to the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the number of metropolitan businesses that struggled to find employees over the last 10 years increased by nearly six fold—from 13 percent to 73 percent. Step Up curbs this trend by connecting talented young people to career opportunities at more than 200 organizations in our region.

Step Up seeks to meet these industries' growing labor demand by providing historically underrepresented youth with career exploration opportunities and access to internships that establish career pathways that are in high-demand sectors. By allowing youth who have credit deficiencies to earn the credits they need most, we support and nurture youth to achieve academic success. This benefits the youth, their employers, and the community.

### **Identification of those involved, including collaborators**

The City of Minneapolis, Project for Pride in Living and Minneapolis Public Schools were the main partners for this project. Additional support has come from AchieveMpls and the Minneapolis Workforce Centers including DEED youth staff. Curriculum design was done by EJ Design Firm.

### **Leveraging/alignment of outside resources**

This major curriculum alignment could have not have been accomplished without the support and collaboration of the partners listed above. In addition to City of Minneapolis funds, additional outside resources leverage or directly support youth wages. These resources included: U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant; State of Minnesota Youth Programs Grant and Youth Supportive Services Grant. The State of Minnesota Department of Education provides credit reimbursement funds.

Credit recovery for 9<sup>th</sup> graders was a partnership with the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Public Schools credit recovery team with the support of two dedicated teachers.

### **Ideas for replication/lessons learned**

In the future, we plan to expand our credit offering to allow interns who have already earned the CRS credit to earn work experience credits. We plan to adjust our CRS curriculum for different tiers of students next year. For example, we want a different curriculum for youth who went through the course this year and have earned the career readiness seminar credit already. We also want to offer professional development to youth who are in Step Up, but have completed high school in order to support them in their next step in career or college.

We hope to expand the credit recovery option for 2019. We are in progress now and will assess changes needed to plan for summer 2019 expansion.

Additionally, we are in the process of developing a toolkit for components of Step Up that could be shared for best practices in other areas.