

Youth at the Center:
A Meta-Evaluation of the STEP-UP Program

MPA/MPP Capstone Paper

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We dedicate this capstone to the memory of Gary DeCramer,
who shared with us his love of poetry.

Hold on to what is good,
Even if it's a handful of earth.
Hold on to what you believe,
Even if it's a tree that stands by itself.
Hold on to what you must do,
Even if it's a long way from here.
Hold on to your life,
Even if it's easier to let go.
Hold on to my hand,
Even if someday I'll be gone away from you.
- Pueblo Indian prayer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the eight years since its founding, the STEP-UP summer youth employment program has served over 14,000 Minneapolis youth, providing an experience that pairs work readiness training with 8-weeks of paid internship at a Minneapolis business or non-profit. STEP-UP, a city government initiative of the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP), relies on partnership with AchieveMpls in the operation of the program, as well as with a range of public, non-profit and private sector partners that teach, place, hire and supervise the low-income youth served by STEP-UP.

Using a meta-evaluation framework, the consulting team set out to identify the strengths and opportunity areas in the STEP-UP program. The intent of the 15-week project was to provide STEP-UP program leaders a high level analysis, identifying areas that warrant deeper study and making first-level recommendations for improvement of the program.

The team's meta-evaluation of STEP-UP uncovered several key findings. Most notable was the tension between two stated program goals: to prepare youth for meaningful work experiences; and to develop the next-generation workforce for Minneapolis employers. The mission and vision of STEP-UP are neither clear, nor shared by all program partners. In some ways the program design and structure actually work against program goals.

Upon analysis of these findings, the consulting team makes the following recommendations:

- **Adopt one clear and synthesizing vision that navigates the tension between the program goals.** A vision such as “every youth work ready” would provide a strong foundation for a continuum of programming that is youth-centered.
- **Design STEP-UP as a youth-centered, developmental continuum.** Redesigning the program as a youth-centered continuum requires the program to accept all qualifying

youth into the program, employ laddering within the program, and expand the portfolio on internships offered to fully reflect the broad range of Minneapolis vocations.

- **Improve program elements of work readiness training, internship placement process, and CLASS training.** Deepen engagement with the families of participating youth, and consider a mentorship component. A cohort model is worthy of further consideration.

INTRODUCTION

When Minneapolis' STEP-UP summer jobs program emerged in 2004, it arose from a long and illustrious Minnesota tradition of innovation and success in workforce development. Mike Christenson, one of STEP-UP's founding leaders and formerly Director of Community Planning and Economic Development in Minneapolis, notes: "In 1971, the best workforce development initiative in the world was invented in this state. It was called the Minnesota Miracle, and it landed Governor Wendell Anderson on the cover of *Time* magazine."

But unlike Governor Anderson's workforce development efforts decades earlier, which focused on tax investments in public schools and local governments, STEP-UP exemplified a new, public-private partnership approach to increasing youth work-readiness. Mayor R.T. Rybak asked the non-profit AchieveMpls to develop and run the program, and invited U.S. Bancorp CEO Richard Davis to join him as co-chair. In its first year, STEP-UP trained and placed 200 youth ages 16-21 in summer internships at 50 Minneapolis businesses. Since then, the initiative has produced over 14,000 summer internships for youth in Minneapolis, engaging many of the City's private companies and public organizations, such as U.S. Bancorp, Target, YWCA of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and more than 200 small and large employers.

Today, STEP-UP is well known, recognized by Minneapolis youth as an important summer opportunity, and renowned nationally as a model for integrating youth development and workforce development. Earlier this year, President Barack Obama, whose administration launched a similarly modeled national summer jobs initiative, lauded STEP-UP. The program has also enlarged substantially, having just invited nearly 2300 youth into its preparatory training for the 2012 summer session. All come from low-income families and many will be the first in their family to attend college or other post-secondary training. STEP-UP has also grown in complexity and uses a community-based service delivery model for its operation. The city contracts with a range of leading non-profit and government partners to operate the various recruiting, training, and placement components of the program. In 2010, the City merged STEP-UP with its other youth summer jobs program. It expanded to serve youth ages 14-21 and placed youth in both employer-paid and City-subsidized internships at non-profits and public institutions.

STEP-UP is an initiative of particular relevance today. Unemployment among young people between 16 and 24 years old is at an all time high. Nationwide, approximately 50 percent of these youth are unemployed. During their lifetimes, unemployed youth cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. These costs include public assistance and reduced tax revenues. (Belfield et al, January 2012). These are overwhelming costs, and the unemployment of youth leads to an immense waste of human potential.

Economists and sociologists agree that an increasing number of young Americans have given up looking for jobs, creating problems for generations to come. “Black teens are the least likely to find summer work, while rich white teens are most likely,” according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Huffington Post, April 2012). The Minnesota State Demographers Office reports that minorities under the age of 30 will account for Minnesota’s largest population increase this decade.

As Ben Bernanke, Chairman, Federal Reserve Bank observed in 2006, “Failure on our part to prepare for demographic change will have substantial adverse effects on the economic welfare of our children and grandchildren and on the long-run productive potential of the U.S. economy.”

There is a significant mismatch between the abilities of youth looking for work and the skills needed for the labor market. Without interventions, “this could lead to a situation of a lost generation”

(Gillaspy and McMurry, January 2012). STEP-UP performs a valuable and essential service: providing work readiness training with jobs and career exposure to economically disadvantaged youth in Minneapolis, most of whom are teens of color.

Our consulting team set out to identify strengths and weaknesses in the STEP-UP program and provide program leaders a high level analysis, identifying areas that warrant deeper study and making first-level recommendations for improvement of the program.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Meta-Evaluation

Unlike quantitative analysis, meta-evaluation applies descriptive and judgmental information in an effort to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a program. Meta-evaluation reveals patterns, relationships, outcomes of a program, areas for growth, and more. In addition, this approach reveals areas requiring further investigation. After discussion with the client, our team undertook meta-evaluation to examine the various program elements and partnerships in the STEP-UP program.

Our meta-evaluation revealed overall strengths and weaknesses in the STEP-UP program. Most notably, we found a need for a clearer vision, redesign of the program as a comprehensive, youth-centered continuum, and improvement of specific program elements including application scoring, work readiness training, and internship placement.

Literature Review

Our literature review focused on identifying and analyzing current and best practices, as well as trends in the following areas relevant to the STEP-UP program:

- Public-Private Partnerships
- Work Readiness Training
- Economic Development Programs for Youth
- Summer Youth Employment Programs
- STEP-UP program literature, reports, and survey results

Interviews

In-person interviews gave us direct insight and knowledge into the STEP-UP program and partnerships. We interviewed decision makers, program managers, partners, clients and employers of the program. We sought to understand motivations for participation, expectations, and thoughts on the program's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for growth and improvement. We interviewed twenty people in the following groups:

- Minneapolis Employment & Training Program leadership and staff
- Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (former and current leadership)
- AchieveMpls leadership and staff
- Project for Pride in Living leadership and staff
- Minneapolis Park & Recreation staff
- Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development's North Minneapolis WorkForce Center leadership & staff

- City of Minneapolis
- STEP-UP program employers

See Appendix A: Interview list

Observation

Our consulting team observed three work readiness trainings conducted by AchieveMpls and Project for Pride in Living that take place prior to internship placements. We also observed the mock interview process conducted by AchieveMpls.

Strengths and Limitations of Our Methodology

The meta-evaluation approach allowed us to conduct deep and illuminating interviews with a wide range of stakeholders and program participants. We did not interview STEP-UP program youth participants or alumni. However, our consulting team reviewed the 2010 and 2011 post-internship youth survey results, giving us some youth feedback on their experiences with and feelings about STEP-UP.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

One of the central efforts of the consulting team’s meta-evaluation work was to synthesize, document and understand STEP-UP’s complex program architecture. From the first days of the project, initial documents and data gathered from METP staff and AchieveMpls underscored the separate nature of the two key program tracks under a STEP-UP “umbrella.” STEP-UP Discover serves youth ages 14-21 with work readiness training and City-subsidized summer internship opportunities in public and non-profit settings. STEP-UP Achieve offers youth ages 16-21 a separate

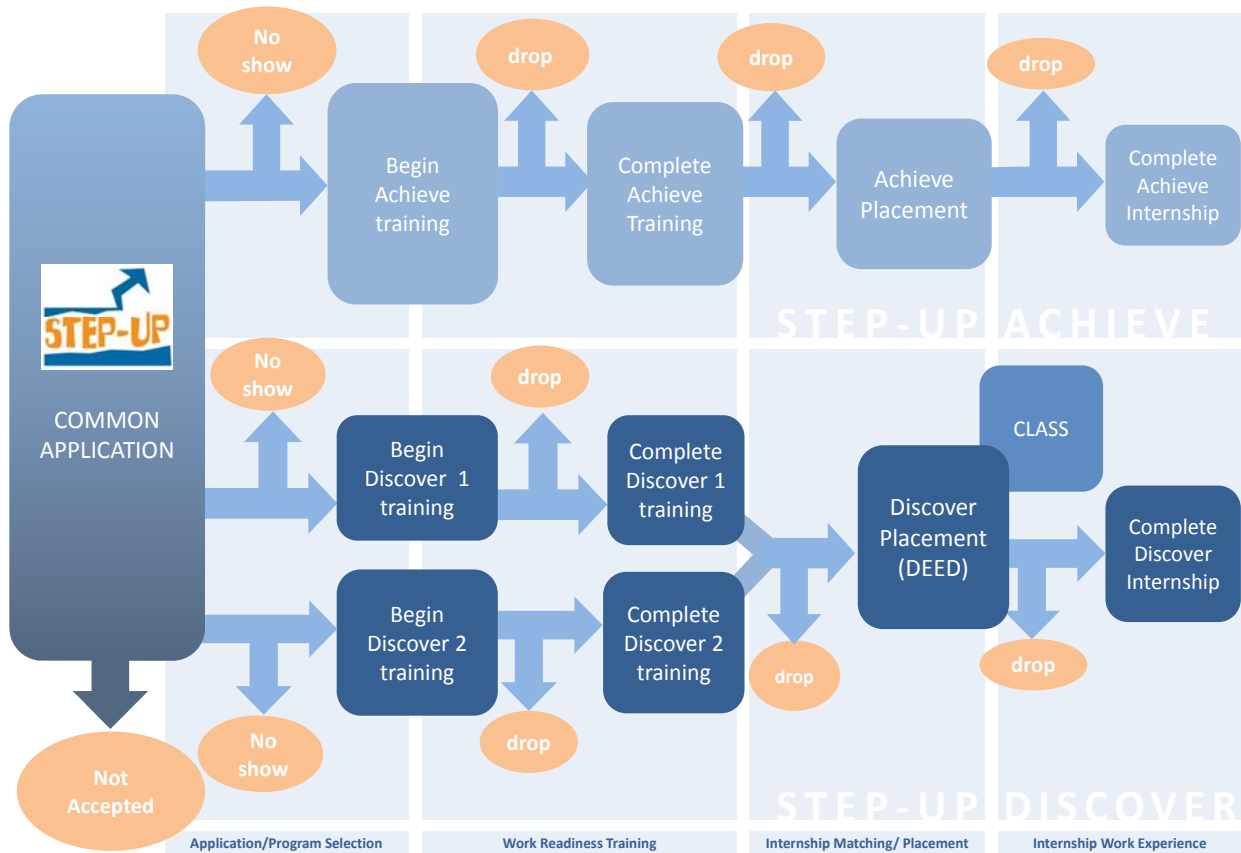


Figure 1: 2011 STEP-UP Program Architecture
(See also Appendix B for version with full program description)

work readiness training curriculum and employer-paid summer internship opportunities in the private sector. The consulting team diagrammed the program activities of these two tracks into four

phases that comprise the experience of STEP-UP: Application/Program Selection; Work Readiness Training; Internship Matching/Placement; and Internship Work Experience.

STEP-UP PROGRAM PHASES

Application/Program Selection

STEP-UP's application processes were combined in 2010 to create a single entry point to all STEP-UP programming. A single application form is used for youth of all ages for placement consideration into either the Achieve or Discover track. Applications are due in early February and collected at Minneapolis high school career centers, Minneapolis WorkForce Centers, Minneapolis public libraries, and by mail. (See **Appendix C: Application form**)

METP internal staff qualify and select applicants, first reviewing for criteria such as income, age, and residency in Minneapolis and then giving each a score. The 29-point scoring system evaluates applicants based on academic achievement, participation in co-curricular school activities, work and volunteer experience, computer skills, and three essay questions addressing the youth's goals in the program.

Based on available budget, applicant age, and application score, a pre-determined number of applicants are invited into work readiness training in either the Achieve track or one of two Discover work readiness training groups. In 2011, of the 3,375 applications received for STEP-UP, 464 were ineligible or had incomplete applications, and 289 were turned away due to low application scores. The remaining 2,622 applicants were ranked by score and age. The upper scores from those ages 16 and up (n=1415) were invited into STEP-UP Achieve's work readiness training program. The remaining applicants went into two levels of STEP-UP Discover work readiness training, with the highest scoring applicants going into Discover Group 1 (n=722), and the lowest scoring applicants

filling Discover Group 2 (n=485). The invitation letters, mailed in March, emphasize that an invitation to work readiness training is no guarantee of an internship placement for the summer.

The central commitment of STEP-UP is youth work readiness, which it achieves through preparatory work readiness training, mock interviews, an internship work experience, and learning opportunities alongside the internship.

Work Readiness Training

The Step-Up Program has three distinct work readiness training sessions serving Achieve and Discover groups. AchieveMpls provides training for the Achieve interns and the higher scoring Discover youth. Project for Pride in Living (PPL) serves the lower scoring Discover youth.

In the work readiness training phase, youth placed into the Achieve program track are assigned to classroom training held at a Minneapolis high school during March and April. In 2011, this training consisted of three two-hour sessions held on weekday early evenings. Each class has one trainer with 25 to 30 youth. The curriculum, developed and delivered by professional staff contracted through AchieveMpls, covers skills aimed at a successful summer internship and also future job searches. Participants work on creating a strong resume and practice interview skills, and the course covers topics such as proper dress, professional communication in a work setting, responsible use of technology, and how to build and cultivate a professional network.

METP also contracts with AchieveMpls to develop and deliver the work readiness classroom training for Discover Group 2, which is comprised of youth with higher scoring applications, but whose age and application scores did not meet the requirements for STEP-UP Achieve. Although Achieve program staff lead Discover Group 2 in separate classrooms, these sessions take place alongside the STEP-UP Achieve work readiness training. Training for Discover Group 2 is adapted

from the STEP-UP Achieve curriculum to address younger ages and youth whose applications were deemed to reflect a lower level of work-readiness.

Beginning in 2010, METP contracted with Project for Pride in Living (PPL) to develop and conduct work readiness training for Discover Group 1, which is comprised of youth with the lowest accepted application scores. PPL is a well-respected Twin Cities non-profit with a 40-year history of providing housing, employment training, support services, and education programs for low-income people. PPL's work readiness curriculum targets those with the greatest need for basic work-readiness. Delivered over two consecutive Saturdays of full-day classroom sessions, the curriculum addresses a wide array of work readiness skills, and is highly participatory, employing role-play, interview practice, and discussion. The class also draws on guest speakers, among them former STEP-UP youth who share their experiences and answer questions. Class sizes are between 30 and 35, led by one trainer and one volunteer. Youth in different age groups are divided into seven classes. New for 2012, PPL held this training program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College to depart from the familiar high school environment and expose participating youth to a higher education setting. At the conclusion of the work readiness training phase, trainers complete a short assessment on each program participant, consisting of a quantitative score and also a short written comment.

While the work readiness training phase of STEP-UP is positioned as a selective, developmental step in preparation for a paid STEP-UP summer internship, the program also stresses it as a valuable opportunity even for those youth who are not selected for a position in the subsequent internship phase. The STEP-UP brochure suggests: "Once you've completed training, you'll also be eligible for a Work Readiness Credential from the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of

Commerce and signed by Minneapolis Mayor Rybak. Your credential will look impressive on your resume and give you something great to talk about in a job interview.”

Achieve also provides youth participants with a valuable mock interview experience. During work readiness training, youth are assigned to one of four sessions held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Volunteers are recruited to conduct the interviews with approximately 100 volunteers assisting 400 youth. Volunteers are prepared in advance with interview questions and feedback forms (**See Appendix D and E**). Each youth participates in a ten-minute interview — eight minutes of questions and answers followed by two minutes of feedback. Youth were motivated and eager to participate in the mock interviews and commented that it was a valuable experience.

Internship Matching/Placement

At the conclusion of the work readiness training phase, STEP-UP program participants are considered for placement in a paid summer internship. As in the training phase, youth whose application scores placed them in the Achieve or Discover track are considered separately, and in this case, through a wholly different process. For the Discover program, METP contracts with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to conduct placement sessions at its two Minneapolis WorkForce Centers. Following the initial work readiness trainings, DEED mails STEP-UP Discover participants who have successfully completed work readiness training an assigned appointment date at either the North or South Minneapolis WorkForce Center for an internship placement interview. These appointment slots — for 2011, nearly 600 over three Saturdays in May — are assigned in a ranked order based on a combination of the application score and the trainer-assessed work readiness training score; participants with the highest scores receive the first appointments.

During the WorkForce Center appointment, STEP-UP Discover participants are required to complete work eligibility paperwork (19 forms), and spend ten minutes with a DEED-contracted job counselor discussing their interests, and completing the STEP-UP Youth Training Plan. (See **Appendix F – Youth Training Plan**) The youth and the job counselor complete the Youth Training Plan form covering the participant’s academic strengths and challenges, employment interests, and skills, including foreign language proficiency and computer abilities. In addition, the interview and form address any special services that the youth may need, including disability accommodations and transportation needs. After determining possible internship choices for the participant, the job counselor makes an assignment based on the availability of internships and readiness for a suitable position. Youth assigned a STEP-UP Discover internship receive directions for contacting the employer to complete an orientation and begin the work experience.

AchieveMpls program staff handles the placement process for STEP-UP Achieve independently. Although the consulting team did not review this process, Achieve staff describe a similar process of considering candidates based on a combination of one-on-one interview, application score and work readiness training score.

Internship Work Experience

At the heart of the STEP-UP experience is a 6 to 10 week paid internship. For youth placed into the STEP-UP Achieve track, an internship begins in June and runs for 8 to 9 weeks, ending in mid-August. For 2011, Achieve internship positions were available at 145 sites, offering professional and career-oriented positions for private, non-profit and public sector employers who fund the positions for 20 to 40 hours each week at a rate of \$7.25 and above. AchieveMpls also provides a small number of subsidies to non-profit employers with professional level internship positions. Alongside the Achieve internship experience, youth participate in special learning

opportunities provided by Achieve partners on topics ranging from career exploration to personal finance skills.

For those 2011 participants who were accepted and completed work readiness training in the STEP-UP Discover track, the internship experience was at one of 66 public or non-profit organizations, with wages paid by METP budgeted funds. Depending on the position, participants work up to 27 hours per week at a rate of \$7.25 per hour. Payroll and administrative services for Discover interns are provided by DEED, with paper timecards submitted by participating employers to one of the DEED Workforce Centers.

Alongside the STEP-UP Discover internship experience, METP contracts with Minneapolis Park and Recreation to provide approximately 700 Discover youth a required, weekly three-hour classroom experience, called CLASS, at two high schools in North and South Minneapolis for eight weeks. Each session is divided into one-hour blocks: Life Skills, Basic Skills, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Classes are scheduled Monday through Thursday with each youth assigned to one particular day of the week to attend regularly.

Paid to attend, youth can receive high school credit for their CLASS experience. CLASS trainers administer a test of basic academic skills to participants before and after the eight-week program, and trainers report that skill levels range from the third grade up to advanced high school ability. The majority of the youth are ages 14-15, although Discover includes 16-18 year-olds with low STEP-UP application scores. The curriculum is the same for all youth in the Discover track, and youth are divided into classes of 25 to 30 students without regard to age or skill level. STEP-UP Achieve participants do not have a training curriculum alongside the summer internship phase of the program, but are offered a range of special learning opportunities arranged by AchieveMpls and provided by participating STEP-UP Achieve partners.

At the conclusion of the internship phase--the final phase of the STEP-UP summer program--STEP-UP holds a recognition event to celebrate the accomplishments of interns and the participation of employers. Also present are Mayor Rybak, program leadership from METP and AchieveMpls.

Persistence Rates Within STEP-UP

METP publishes data about application acceptance and persistence in work readiness training in annual reports on the STEP-UP program. To understand participants' progress through the program and its four phases -- application/program selection, work readiness training, placement, and internship--the consulting team gathered participant counts for each activity for 2011 and used these numbers to create the program architecture diagram.

The issue of persistence provides a great example of how meta-evaluation can uncover issues worthy of deeper study. On the surface, the diagrammed participation numbers were cause for concern: of the 3,375 youth who applied to STEP-UP in 2011, only 1,276 (38%) persisted through the internship phase.

	<u>Discover</u>		<u>Achieve</u>
	Group 1 (PPL)	Group 2	
Accepted	485	722	1415
Began Training	382	549	1085
% Began/Accepted	79%	76%	77%
Completed Training	304	468	890
% Completed/Began Training	80%	85%	82%
Placed in Internship	599		705
% Placed/Completed Training	78%		79%
Completed Internship	595		681
% Completed Internship/Placed	99%		97%

Table 1-Appendix G: 2011 Persistence Rate Summary

Evaluating the full set of 2011 program data led to a different picture of persistence through STEP-UP, summarized in Table 1. First, a large number of applicants (more than 20 percent in each track) who were accepted into the first phase of the program — work readiness training — never actually showed up to begin any training. Rather than count these as trainees who “dropped” during the first week, we have corrected the logic to reflect them as never having begun training. With this correction, the data shows training persistence rates of 80% or better, and remarkably consistent performance across the three training program tracks.

Of those who completed the STEP-UP work readiness training phase, 78 percent of Discover participants and 79 percent of Achieve participants were successfully placed in internships. Notes from the database and interviews with STEP-UP staff suggest that most of those applicants who were not placed in internships were either not interested in or not available for the internship phase of the program, often due to having found a summer job on their own, family schedules and vacations, or participation in summer school. The data suggest that almost all of those STEP-UP participants who successfully completed the training phase and sought an internship position were ultimately offered one.

Finally, data in the STEP-UP program database pointed to remarkable persistence through the paid internship phase of STEP-UP. Of those who began internships, 99 percent of Discover participants and 97 percent of Achieve participants successfully completed them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Adopt one vision, with youth at the center.

Create a clear and synthesizing mission that navigates the tension between the goals of STEP-UP Discover and STEP-UP Achieve.

Throughout the 15-week study, the consulting team recognized how STEP-UP Achieve and STEP-UP Discover grew from — and largely remain — two separate and distinct programs. STEP-UP Achieve evolved from the nonprofit 501(c) 3 AchieveMpls under contract with the City, and STEP-UP Discover developed from the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP). In 2010 the City of Minneapolis brought together these two programs, establishing STEP-UP as the City’s “umbrella” for work readiness programs for low-income youth. STEP-UP is only now beginning to live up to its potential to offer opportunities for low-income youth as they develop into a valuable part of tomorrow’s workforce. City leaders have embarked on a strategic planning process and are trying to clarify the vision and mission of STEP-UP across its programs. The consulting team agrees that STEP-UP must have a clear and synthesizing vision to succeed as an umbrella organization under which multiple programs and partners serve.

Such clarity of vision is essential for public-private partnerships (PPPs) like STEP-UP. Across the literature on PPPs, the importance of creating a shared vision is cited as fundamental for successful partnerships. Agreement on a clear vision serves as a roadmap from which all activities are developed and bonds the partners. And partners are better able to manage the inevitable conflicts because of their commitment to the same overarching mission

For STEP-UP, what has emerged as the tension between the City and its primary partner, AchieveMpls, is actually a broader conceptual tension between two different program goals. The City aims to provide opportunity for low-income youth to increase their work readiness, which is the

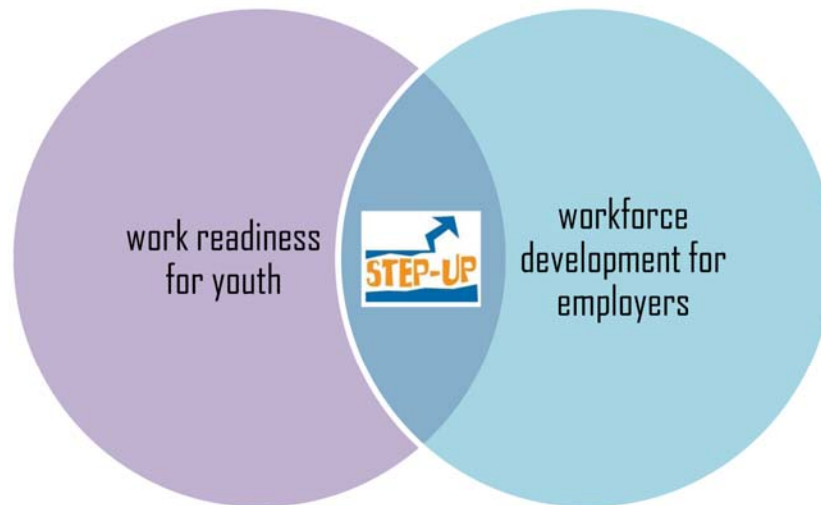


Figure 2 – Appendix H: Venn Diagram

longstanding focus of the City’s nonprofit internship program, now called STEP-UP Discover. On the other hand, STEP-UP Achieve approaches youth programming by preparing youth to take on the corporate/professional internship opportunities that it has long championed.

Many of the people that the consulting team interviewed recognize the innovative potential of STEP-UP to serve both goals under one umbrella, maximizing the overlap between youth work readiness and economic development. When we examined STEP-UP, however, the consulting team found little alignment between the inclusive character of STEP-UP Discover and the selective processes of STEP-UP Achieve. AchieveMpls staff is concerned about the lack of preparation and aptitude of youth applicants for its corporate internships, especially since it was required to implement means testing. City staff worry that AchieveMpls’ selectivity and its focus on professional and high-wage sectors unfairly limit the opportunity for many youth to participate.

Leadership is one of the most critical components to successful Public Private Partnerships. Leaders can unify the partners around a singular mission and vision, and when partners share the same vision, they are more engaged in the success of the partnership. Clear leadership and

governance structures help to define the partners' roles, and regular strategy meetings keep the vision alive and the lines of communication open (The Finance Project, 2007).

Under new leadership in 2010, the City's METP staff is prepared to navigate this tension and align the components of STEP-UP and its partners around a unifying and compelling vision that is clearly owned by the City. It appears that METP leaders will advance the idea of making "every youth work ready," thus strengthening the umbrella of STEP-UP. Such a vision statement would not only underscore access to STEP-UP for low-income youth, but also provide the foundation for a comprehensive program architecture that places youth at its center.

In Jay Kiedrowski's *Navigating the New Normal*, he puts forth an approach to government innovation and redesign in resource-lean times. One of his tenets is that "redesign is less about improving individual components of existing business processes and more about improving the entire business process using new thinking." The independent programs of STEP-UP Discover and STEP-UP Achieve are meeting their individual organizational objectives but are only serving part of the needs of each young beneficiary. From interviews conducted, it appears that the success of Achieve may have the unintended consequence of lessening the optimum experience of Discover youth. When youth are at the center, all services focus on meeting their needs and the partnership becomes more efficient and effective.

Recommendation 2: Design STEP-UP as a youth-centered continuum.

A comprehensive and youth-centered vision does more than provide a common goal for all the program partners; it ultimately challenges the design of STEP-UP. A broad commitment such as "every youth work ready" (currently under consideration by METP leadership) requires training that meets all income-eligible youth "where they are," regardless of their developmental training levels,

and presents internship opportunities that represent every sector of the workforce. To meet this commitment, STEP-UP must move beyond its origins as discrete programs — programs that are visible under the STEP-UP umbrella as separate tracks for participating youth: AchieveMpls’ original STEP-UP (selective) and the METP’s summer youth internships (low-income).

This challenge of a more cohesive STEP-UP is not new. The current design of the program, in fact, already reflects a first phase of integration. Since 2010, when new METP leadership joined together AchieveMpls and city-run programs under a single STEP-UP umbrella, the City has implemented a common recruiting strategy. It has contracted with AchieveMpls to recruit for the entire STEP-UP program through events and coordination with public, private, alternative, and charter schools. The city has also recognized the need for branding and marketing efforts that support an integrated STEP-UP, and made a plan to coordinate these activities in its 2011 partnership agreement with AchieveMpls. A new and unified STEP-UP application form for all program tracks is collected, evaluated and scored by METP staff.

The application process, however, marks the end of STEP-Up’s current integration. Based on age and a 29-point scoring rubric, youth are placed for the entire summer into one of two program tracks, beginning work readiness training under STEP-UP Achieve or STEP-UP Discover. Due to budget constraints in 2010 and 2011, some eligible youth were not accepted into any work-readiness training program.

AchieveMpls’ leaders have explained the rigidity of the separate tracks as necessary to match youth with appropriate internship opportunities requiring different levels of skill and work readiness. Our consulting team, however, recognized in the existing internship positions a broad range of skill and work-readiness opportunities that span the boundaries of AchieveMpls’ available internships and Discover’s portfolio of internship opportunities. AchieveMpls’ program leaders underscore their

clear focus on maintaining separate program jurisdiction over their own tracks. Our team questions whether this separation meets any youth-focused program goal.

The meta-evaluation draws on best practice literature in youth program design and work readiness training, interviews of program leaders, and application data to suggest five primary strategies worthy of further study.

Strategy 1: Accept all low-income youth

To make “every youth work-ready,” STEP-UP should accept every eligible youth based on Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) income guidelines. The work readiness training would then meet youth “where they are” at any level. STEP-UP would use the application to assess participants’ needs and interests rather than attempting to predict success in an internship. There is no evidence that the current application scoring mechanism can predict work readiness or internship success. Work readiness training has broad benefits whether or not youth progress through the training phase to placement in a STEP-UP internship.

Minneapolis Public Schools’ MyLifePlan is an online tool used by every Minneapolis student to explore careers and postsecondary education or work. AchieveMpls operates the career and college centers in all Minneapolis Public Schools, and championed the implementation of the MyLifePlan requirement. Coordinating the STEP-UP recruiting and application process with the MyLifePlan system will leverage data already collected regarding vocational interest, academic performance and co-curricular participation. In addition, the coordination will identify those who would benefit from STEP-UP and simplify the application process.

Strategy 2: Implement a multi-tiered approach

If STEP-UP aims to be valuable for youth with varied skills, the availability of a wide range of employment experiences is essential. Building a cohesive and youth-focused program does not mean eliminating the various levels of work readiness training and internship placements. For example, the Philadelphia Youth Network is a comprehensive program that offers a wide variety of work experiences through a three-tiered approach. No youth is ever turned away. The three tiers to the employment experience are:

- *Service learning* organizes youth into teams that provide a community service. This experience is for those with no work experience who need work-readiness skills.
- *Work experience* is offered to youth with little or no work experience. Activities combine a work experience with work-readiness and academic training.
- *Internships* are offered to those youth who have work experience and some preparation for more rigorous employment. These opportunities are similar to the experiences that AchieveMpls offers.

This three-tiered model helps place youth in the level that is most closely aligned with their skills, abilities and interests and in which they will have the most success. The program is also designed to develop academic skills, and demonstrate the connection between success in school and in work.

Strategy 3: Employ laddering

Effective program design relies on a “ladder” of training and internship opportunities that encourages success, recognizing that achievement at one level is a step to the next. Although program elements within the Achieve and Discover tracks do represent such levels, three design

traits of the current STEP-UP program prevent effective laddering. The Achieve and Discover tracks are locked in from the start, based only on an application-scoring rubric that is not correlated with work readiness. A youth-centered design provides a common, introductory workshop grouped first by age, allowing trainers to learn the interests and strengths of each participant. Referrals to a second training phase could then be based on broader criteria. This would allow consideration of traits such as attitude, which was cited as the primary predictor of success in multiple interviews with program leaders, yet could not be gleaned from an application score. Moreover, our consulting team learned that the application score, collected before any work readiness training begins, is used as part of a ranking by DEED to prioritize first-choice internship placements in the Discover track.

Currently, STEP-UP is not designed for an intentional progression from Discover to Achieve. Applicants with previous successful training and internship experiences in Discover are not differentiated from Achieve applicants with work or volunteer experience. In fact, those applicants with Discover experience earn only one point on a 29-point scale. Given the absence of other measures, successful completion of the Discover track should be studied as a potential predictor of future success. In the current program design, poor grades or lack of computer skills would keep an applicant from progressing to an Achieve internship despite outstanding performance in a previous summer through Discover. The assessment data collected in STEP-UP does not report on this important progression from Discover to Achieve.

The internship opportunities available through AchieveMpls are not available to Discover track participants, regardless of their vocational interest, demonstrated soft skills, or performance in work readiness training. While AchieveMpls' portfolio of internship opportunities encompasses positions requiring the highest skill levels, many of its private sector internships could be suitable developmental opportunities for successful Discover participants. Our consulting team could find no

youth-centered reason for AchieveMpls to hold private sector internships exclusively for youth whose application score placed them into the Achieve track from the start.

Strategy 4: Expand the portfolio of internships

Not only are the existing Achieve track internships unavailable for youth whose application score places them in the Discover track, but also AchieveMpls' exclusive control of private sector internships does not represent the broad range of vocations in the private sector. A youth-centered program design would provide a continuum of internship opportunities in both the public and private sector — an integrated portfolio available to all STEP-UP participants that more closely aligns with their skills, abilities and interests. Even if the current positions available in the Achieve and Discover tracks were combined, there would be significant gaps. Achieve's focus on a narrow set of work sectors — especially finance, law, and health care (described by AchieveMpls leadership as “professional”) — leaves out a wide array of opportunities for youth and for private sector employers in other fields, including construction, manufacturing and service industries. METP leadership should consider setting a goal to diversify private sector internships available in STEP-UP, expanding the portfolio through partnership with AchieveMpls or by adding other program partners with ties to other segments of the workforce such as Dunwoody College of Technology and Minneapolis Community and Technical College. To realize the vision of “every youth work ready,” the portfolio of internships in STEP-UP should reflect the variety of workforce development needs and career opportunities in Minneapolis.

Strategy 5: Address silos and creaming

Two areas of concern, silos and creaming, rose to the surface in our evaluation and recur in the literature on public-private partnerships and effective program design. Both should be avoided in

pursuing a comprehensive, youth-focused design for the STEP-UP program. Current placement of youth in discrete program silos is easily traceable to the origins of the program and particularly to the sense of program authorship expressed by AchieveMpls leaders. These leaders explain the separation as a demand of the Achieve track's participating employers. We believe the tracks are more reflective of the tensions in the partner agreement between the city and AchieveMpls than they are driven by a comprehensive, youth-centered program design.

METP's current program placement and application scoring system makes the existence of Achieve's program silos even more troubling. For applicants aged 16-21, who are eligible for either program track, placement into STEP-UP Achieve is based solely on a 29-point application scoring rubric. Applicants receive points for academic achievement (4 possible), participation in co-curricular school activities excluding athletics (2 possible), work and volunteer experience (4 possible), computer skills (7 possible), and three essay questions pertaining to the youth's goals in the program (12 possible). No research-based evidence exists for this rubric to predict success in a STEP-UP internship. In addition, this placement process is conducted without regard for whether the vocational aspirations of applicants match Achieve's internships. By a simple cut-off score, the upper scoring applicants are invited into Achieve's work readiness training and the remaining applicants are assigned to Discover's training program, as space allows. After the training phase of each track, participants receive a training performance score. This score does not allow for the consideration of cross-placements between Discover and Achieve that could benefit youth participants.

In his article for Labor Economics, "Screening (and Creaming?) Applicants to Job Training Programs," Larry Orr refers to the dilemma of differentiating between "applicants (1) most likely to benefit from the program or (2) who are likely to experience the highest absolute outcomes in the

absence of program services, sometimes called ‘creaming.’” Orr’s study concludes that the differentiation “did not systematically affect the size of program impacts or the return on investment.” STEP-UP Achieve’s practice of accepting the highest-scoring applicants appears to serve the operational preferences of AchieveMpls rather than the effectiveness of the program in serving youth.

Logic Model

The redesign of STEP-UP as a youth-centered continuum requires examining the program inputs, outputs, and outcomes. A logic model is a useful tool for visualizing the resources needed and the proper chain of events required to meet the desired program outcomes, as well as for program evaluation. The logic model illustrates redevelopment of the program investments, activities, participants and the resulting near and long-term outcomes. According to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a leader in logic model development, “the ability to identify outcomes and anticipate ways to measure them provides all program participants with a clear map of the road ahead.” The logic model included in this study is intended to provide STEP-UP leadership with a template for the program.

Logic models and the programs they depict are grounded in assumptions about the program. In the case of STEP-UP, our program assumptions include:

- employers desire a skilled workforce ready to meet the ever-changing needs of the economy;
- youth can learn workplace attitudes and soft skills with the right mix of training and real-world experience;
- a summer of work combined with work readiness training improves youth development;

- STEP-UP Discover is a stage in the continuum of summer work experience programs offered by the City of Minneapolis, yet it can function alone as a freestanding program.

These assumptions underscore the activities that the organization should undertake to reach intended outcomes. A logic model helps align assumptions and expectations for stakeholders to arrive at a shared understanding of the program goals.

The included logic model template uses 2011 STEP-UP program figures as a baseline. Exact figures of inputs, such as number of FTEs or budget figures, should be reconsidered if the program develops into a youth-centered continuum. Additionally, the logic model identifies Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) competencies as the work readiness curriculum base, though this should be replaced with the evidenced-based curriculum of choice. Similarly, the included near and long-term outcomes are recommendations for applicable outcomes of the program yet may change depending on other adjustments to the inputs or outputs of the program.

STEP-UP As a Youth-Centered Continuum

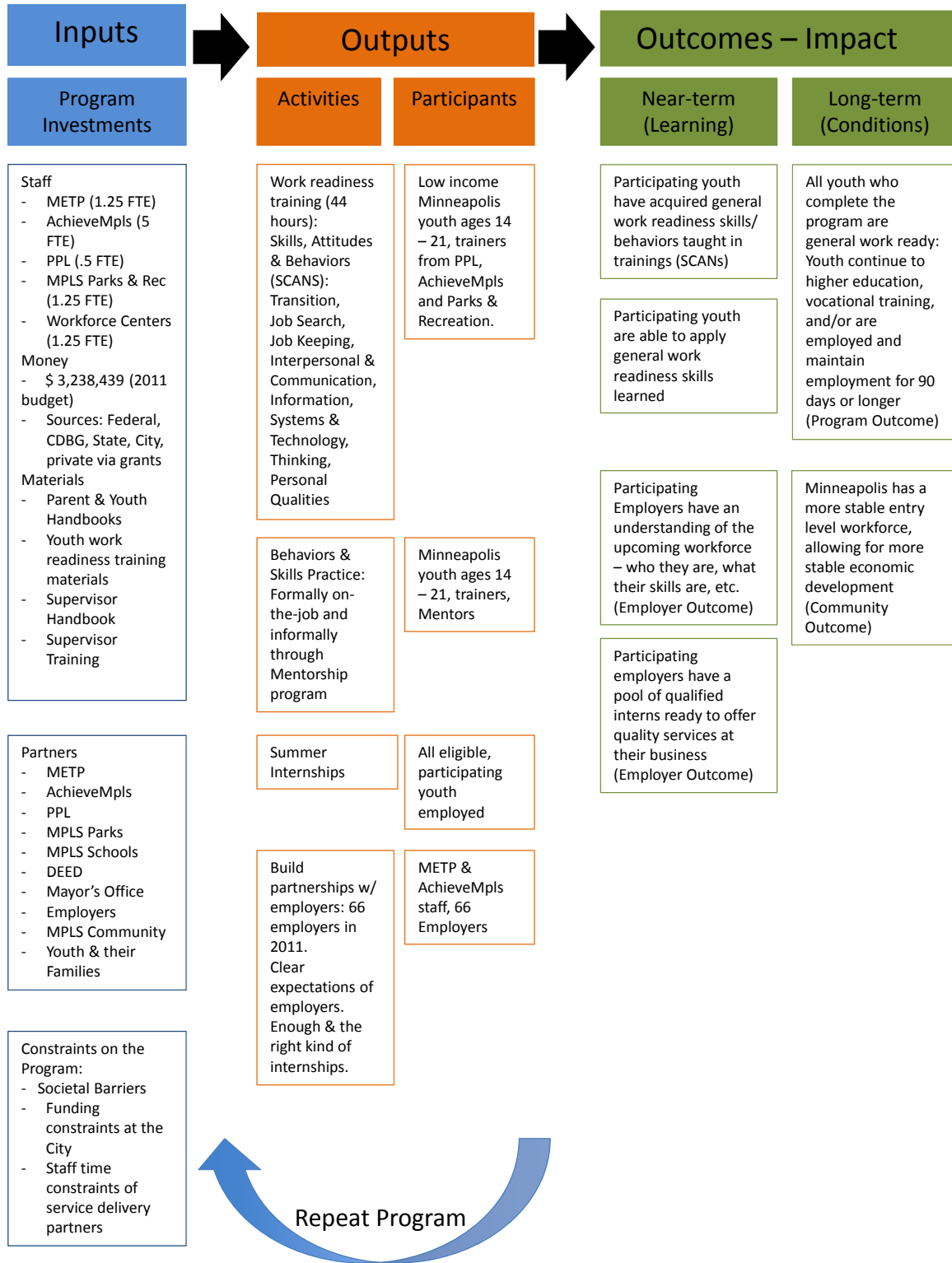


Figure 3 – Appendix I: Logic Model

Recommendation 3: Improve Program Elements

Redesign the application process

Currently, applications are scored using a 29-point scale that intends to evaluate work readiness on variables such as academic success, co-curricular involvement in school, previous work experience, writing/communication ability (3 essay questions), and computer skills. This score determines a youth's track placement for the summer. Instead, a youth-centered design would use the application to assess participants' needs and interests rather than attempting to predict program success with an untested scoring rubric. An example of a youth-centered application process would be an introductory orientation workshop, grouped at first simply by age, in which trainers would learn in more qualitative terms the interests and strengths of participants. Referrals to further levels could be based on richer criteria than can be assessed in the current 29-point rubric.

Two other considerations are worthy of further study to improve the application process. First, the process could leverage demographic, academic achievement and vocational interest data already available for each applicant in the Minneapolis Public Schools' MyLifePlan system. MyLifePlan is a project championed and managed by AchieveMpls staff under contract with Minneapolis Public Schools, so AchieveMpls is well positioned to integrate a STEP-UP application that incorporates this system data. Second, careful consideration should be given to an online application process for STEP-UP to ease the paperwork burden inherent in the current process. Recently, Washington DC's OneCity Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) implemented a fully-online tool, the SYEP Youth Portal, for managing information, communication, program application and placement (National League of Cities Congressional City Conference).

Hold all training in post-secondary settings

Follow PPL's model of holding the work readiness training in a post-secondary school environment. Exposing youth to this environment underscores the importance of higher education. Consider holding training on three successive Saturdays after lunch, and group youth by age and skills. This avoids the chaos of the lunch hour and breaks up lengthy training sessions but still provides twelve hours of work readiness training.

Improve Training Curriculum

Our group consulted with Deborah Laurel, President of Laurel and Associates, Ltd., an international Human Resources Development Learning and Consulting firm. Laurel reviewed the Discover and Achieve training handbooks and provided detailed feedback (personal communication, April 22, 2012). A summary of her observations and recommendations:

- Determine the goals of the curriculum. Create specific learning objectives that flow directly from those goals.
- The handbooks are formatted like textbooks that must generate negative impressions at the very beginning for students. Consider re-designing them to be more visual and less text-heavy.
- The materials are designed around gaining knowledge, but there are no methods to check comprehension. Develop ways to check comprehension by using fun and engaging puzzles and games.

Laurel suggests structuring the handbook modules as follows:

Module 1: What STEP-UP is All About

Module 2: How to Decide What Job You Want

Module 3: How to Write a Resume

Module 4: How to Answer Interview Questions

Module 5: How to Prepare for Your First Day on the Job

Module 6: Do's and Don'ts on the Job

Lengthen mock interview sessions

Interview and feedback sessions should be lengthened by three to four minutes. This would allow the interviewer to go into more depth and help participants develop some real-life examples (something they struggled with) to use at subsequent interviews. The interviewer would also have more time to provide verbal comments while completing the feedback form.

Change DEED placement process to better match youth to internships

Currently DEED mails STEP-UP Discover participants who have successfully completed work readiness training an assigned appointment date for an internship placement interview. These appointment slots—for 2011, nearly 600 over three Saturdays in May--are assigned in a ranked order based on a combination of the application score and the trainer-assessed work readiness training score; the highest scoring applicants are given the first appointments. The consulting team recommends reconsideration of this placement process, for which a "first come/first served" approach cannot address the complex combination of vocational interest, skills and work readiness. A youth-centered process would interview all participants, collect a range of first-choice options, and then consider all youth choices and needs against all available positions.

Divide CLASS groups by age and skill level

Screen participating youth and place them in training groups based on their age and skills. Consider offering services that help youth prepare for GED classes, and use Friday (the non-class day) to offer tutoring services.

Engage families

Engage parents of youth in the program to serve as volunteers and invite families to events. Offer information, workshops, and support for parents to help them learn more about the program and ways they can help their child succeed. A wide variety of research studies provide convincing evidence that parental involvement benefits youth in many ways including improved academic achievement, lower school dropout rates, better attendance and overall attitude toward school. (National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition Website, 4/13/2012)

Introduce adult mentorships

Introduce mentorships at the beginning of the process and throughout its duration. Trainers and employers believe that mentorships can provide informal and timely feedback and support. Research shows that mentorships improve educational achievement, health and safety, and social and emotional development. Mentorships provide crucial benefits to at-risk youth who may have few positive role models (Child Trends Research Brief). Individually or in groups, mentors and youth need sufficient time to build a trusting relationship. Relationships of twelve months or more with frequent contact produce the best outcomes. Many local organizations, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, and YouthCARE, could provide adult mentors. Groups of young professionals also seek volunteer opportunities, including Young Professionals of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Urban League Young Professionals, and more.

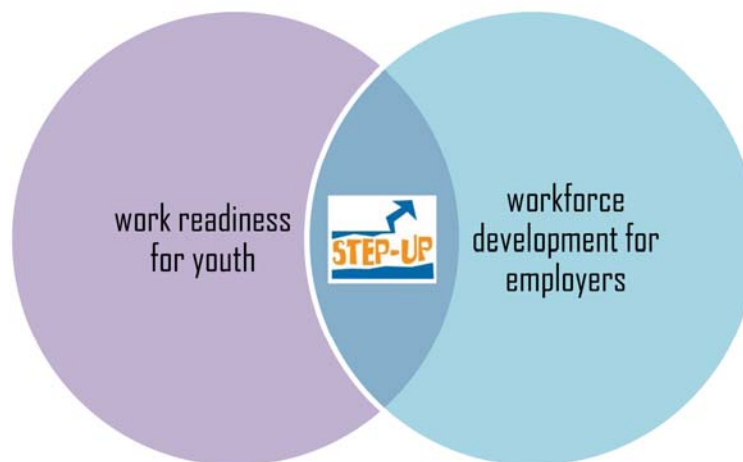
Consider cohort model

In a cohort model, participants experience the phases of a program while staying together as a smaller group. Cohorts are worthy of consideration for STEP-UP. Evidence from interviews with employers and trainers shows that youth meet the program as a bureaucracy. Cohort-provided sense of learning in community and the power of peer-to-peer learning would be a natural fit. Such a model could make the logistics of program requirements in each stage easier to navigate for both youth and program staff. We learned how two separate Discover employers are already treating their small group of STEP-UP interns as a cohort, providing a small group approach to coordinating transportation, orientation, paperwork, etc., and even encouraging the interns to check with each other about questions regarding program or workplace logistics. The consulting team learned that METP is already experimenting with a cohort model in its North 4 Youth Employment Program, and recommends similar consideration for STEP-UP.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the 15-week meta-evaluation project, the consulting team came to see the success of STEP-UP and the tensions within the program as two sides of the same coin: STEP-UP was founded on the compelling idea of a partnership between the public sector, which is focused on the development of youth, and the private sector, which is focused on the development of the next-generation workforce. At the highest level, our meta-evaluation suggests that STEP-UP thrives where these interests overlap — the intersection where the needs of youth and the needs for workforce development come together.

The future of STEP-UP is unlikely to see a resolution of tensions between inclusiveness and selectivity — between focusing on the needs of youth versus the needs of employers. These are tensions inherent in the innovation of STEP-UP, and also represent the source of its power and the bright promise of its future. By aligning STEP-UP behind a compelling and synthesizing vision statement, by refining the design of STEP-UP to reflect an uncompromisingly youth-centered approach, and through a focus on quality across all the elements of the program, STEP-UP will be well-positioned for another decade of growth and service to Minneapolis.



LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adopt one vision with youth at the center:

- Create a clear and synthesizing mission that navigates the tension between the goals of STEP-UP Discover and STEP-UP Achieve. (p.16)

2. Design Step-Up as a youth centered, developmental continuum:

- Accept all low-income youth. (p.20)
- Implement a multi-tiered approach. (p.21)
- Employ laddering. (p.21)
- Expand the portfolio of internships. (p.23)
- Address silos and creaming. (p.23)

3. Improve program elements:

- Redesign the application process. (p.28)
- Hold all training in post-secondary settings. (p.29)
- Improve training curriculum. (p.29)
- Lengthen mock interview sessions. (p.30)
- Change DEED placement process to better match youth to internships. (p.30)
- Divide CLASS groups by age and skill level. (p.31)
- Engage families. (p.31)
- Introduce adult mentors. (p.31)
- Consider a cohort model. (p.32)

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Interview list

Cathy Polasky, Director - Economic Policy & Development, Department of Community Planning and Economic Development

Deb Bahr-Helgen, Director, Minneapolis Employment & Training Program
Anne Fisher, Family Support Specialist III, Minneapolis Employment & Training Program
Tammy Dickinson, STEP-UP Director, Minneapolis Employment & Training Program

James W. Baxter, PhD, CBHE, CPHQ, Area Manager - Corporate Compliance, Accreditation and Quality Assurance, Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department

R.T. Rybak, Mayor, City of Minneapolis

Linda Tkaczik, Program Coordinator, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

MarLynn Schleeter, Teen Teamworks Program Assistant, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Shym Cook, Field Operations Area Manager 2, Department of Employment & Economic Development

Lenore Martin, Department of Employment & Economic Development

Julie Graves, Youth Manager, Waite House
Carrie Fink, Youth Career Counselor, Waite House

Ryan Kirk, Executive Director, Kaleidoscope Place

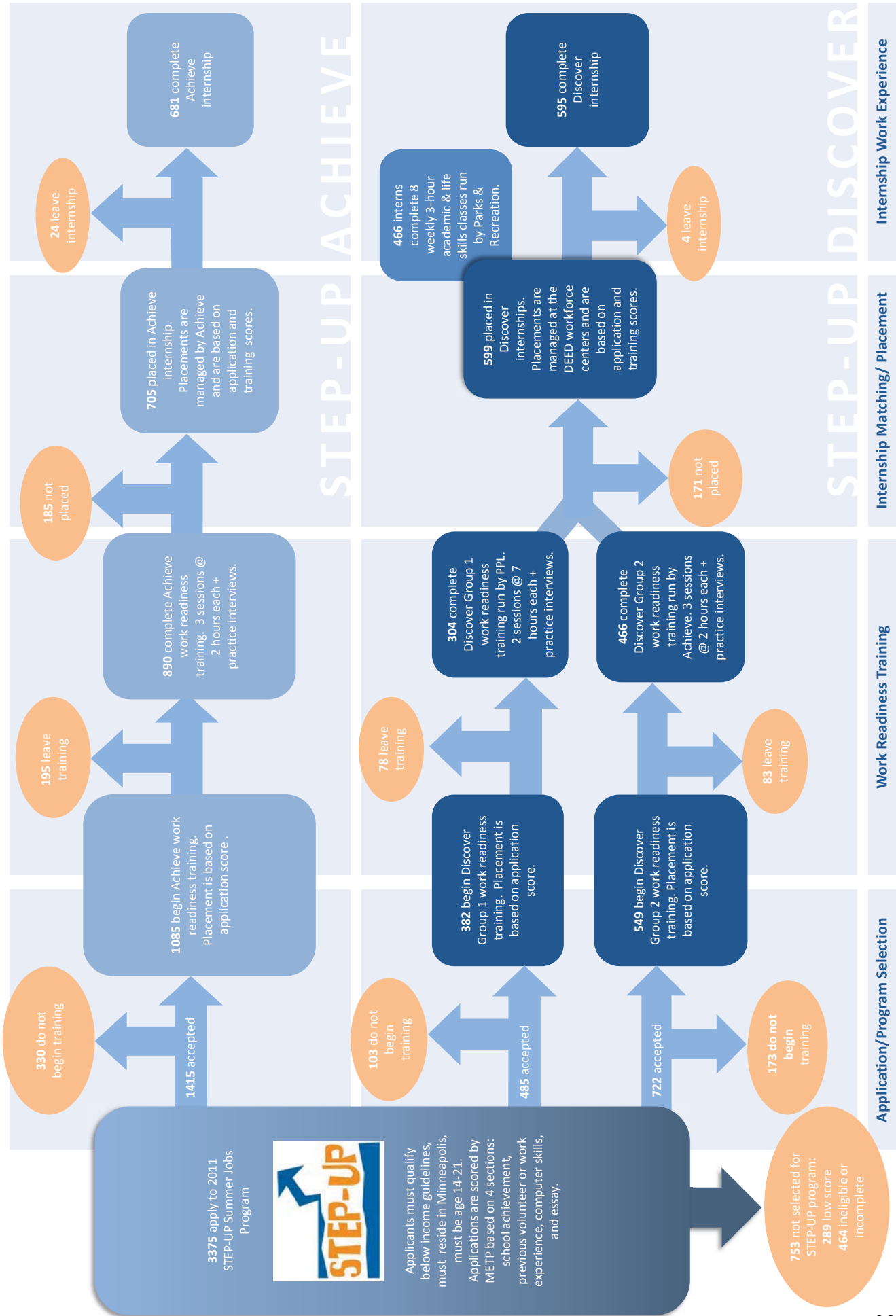
Julie Brekke, Vice President - Programs and Fundraising and Communications, Project for Pride in Living

Sara Olson, Minneapolis ABE Instructor, Project for Pride in Living
Angie Willardson, Employment Technology Supervisor, Project for Pride in Living

Pam Costain, President & CEO, AchieveMpls
Jeremiah Brown, Director - STEP-UP Achieve, AchieveMpls
Joel Lampe, Program Associate - STEP-UP Achieve, AchieveMpls

Mike Christenson, Associate Vice President of Workforce Development, Minneapolis Community & Technical College

Appendix B: 2011 STEP-UP Program Architecture



Humphrey School of Public Affairs Capstone Project, based on data compiled by METP: Ann Aronson, Liz Krough, Andrea MacArthur, & Leif Anderson

Appendix C: Application Form

The City of Minneapolis STEP-UP PROGRAM 2012 Application

STEP-UP is a summer jobs program for Minneapolis youth, ages 14-21.



STEP-UP interns receive job training, then work for pay at Minneapolis businesses and nonprofit organizations to gain job experience, explore career interests, and build professional skills.

To be eligible, you must: live in Minneapolis, be 14-21 years old on June 1, 2012, and NOT be currently enrolled in college (PSEO is okay). Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applicants will be notified of their status the week of March 12, 2012.
Training for accepted applicants will take place in March and April 2012.

Please keep this cover sheet for your record.

Applicants should submit one copy of the application to one of these locations:

- Career & College Center in any Minneapolis Public High School
- South Workforce Center, 777 East Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55407
- North Workforce Center, 1200 Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55411
- Franklin Library, 1314 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404
- Minneapolis Central Library, Teen Central, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55401
- Or mail to: City of Minneapolis METP, 105 5th Avenue South, Room 200, Minneapolis, MN 55401

WE RECOMMEND THAT ALL APPLICANTS CHECK THEIR EMAIL AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ACCEPTANCE AND TRAINING.

The application deadline is: **February 3, 2012**

achievements



Translation Services

Atencion. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame al 612-673-2700.

Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800.

TTY 612-673-2626

Use of Data

Purpose: The purpose of this form is to tell you how we may use the information from your application and participation in this program. It also tells with whom we might share this information and what will happen if you choose not to provide it.

I. Program Information

- Why we are asking for the information: To help us decide whether you are eligible for the program and what other services you may need to become self-sufficient.
- How we plan to use the information: We may use it to prepare required reports, conduct audits, review eligibility and to find out how the program is helping you.
- With whom we may share this information: With staff, for purposes of performing their official duties with, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), from federal state and local welfare agencies.
- If you do not provide this information: You are not required by law to provide this information. If you choose not to provide this information, we may not know whether you are eligible for the program and may not be able to help you.
- Providing false information can lead to removal from the program.

II. Wage Detail Files

We may also use information from wage records kept by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development to help us evaluate the program.

III. Social Security Number

You do not have to provide a Social Security Number to be eligible for our programs. Federal Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act dictates the use of the Social Security Number. We may use it for computer matches, program reviews and improvements, and audits. After you leave the program, the data will be kept until state and federal laws require that it be destroyed.

Funding for the STEP-UP program is provided by local, state and federal sources.

Due to the limited number of jobs available, we encourage you to pursue other job opportunities in addition to STEP-UP.

If you need assistance completing this application or do not understand this page, please contact STEP-UP at 612-673-5041.

Part One: Applicant Information

1. Basic Information

Your Name:

First: _____

Middle: _____

Last: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ (Month/Day/Year)

Check your age on June 1, 2012: 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

**Eligible applicants must be between the ages of 14-21 on June 1, 2012.*

Gender: Male Female

2. Address

Street Address: _____ Apt #: _____

City: _____ State: MN Zip: _____

**Eligible applicants MUST live in the City of Minneapolis.*

3. Contact Information

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Other Phone: _____

Email Address: _____ (We recommend you check your email at least once a week for information and updates. If you do not know how to sign up for a free email account, call 612-673-5041 for assistance.)

Facebook Profile Name: _____

4. School Information

Name of school you are attending, if any: _____

Current grade level: 7 8 9 10 11 12 N/A

Student ID number: _____

5. Work Eligibility

Social Security Number: _____ - _____ - _____

Eligibility to Work (check one):

U.S. Citizen

Non-Citizen, eligible to work in the U.S. (please provide I-94#): _____

I am currently not eligible to work in the U.S.

6. Demographic Information

Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latino Not of Hispanic Origin

Race (check all that apply):

African or African-American Asian-American Caucasian Native American

Immigrant Status (Please select only one):

I was born outside of the U.S.. If yes, where? _____

I was born in the U.S., but one or both of my parents were born outside of the U.S.
If yes, where? _____

I was born in the U.S. and so were my parents.

Part Two: About You

1. **Do you participate in any of the following?** (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admission Possible | <input type="checkbox"/> PSEO | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Placement, CIS, IB, Honors classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Robotics Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Government/Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Math Team/Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Science Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Upward Bound |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mock Trial | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Team | <input type="checkbox"/> Yearbook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project Lead the Way | <input type="checkbox"/> National Honor Society | <input type="checkbox"/> YMCA Youth Programs |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech or Debate Club | <input type="checkbox"/> YWCA Youth Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

2. Work/Volunteer Experience

How many times have you completed STEP-UP work readiness training?

- 0 1 2 3 4

How many times have you worked in a STEP-UP job?

- 0 1 2 3 4

List employment or volunteer experiences (including ALL STEP-UP jobs):

Employer	Job Title	Start and End Dates	Paid? (Y or N)	Duties

Describe specific skills you gained from your volunteer or work experiences:

3. Technical Skills:

I have experience with the following computer programs:

	I have no experience	I have basic knowledge	I have advanced skills
Word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PowerPoint	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outlook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Describe any other computer or technology skills you have:

Part Four: Income and Family Information

Due to local, state and federal funding guidelines, STEP-UP serves students who meet specific income guidelines. If you choose not to provide this information, we may not be able to determine your eligibility to participate in STEP-UP. **This information is required in order for your application to be considered complete.**

1. I am eligible for (check one):

- Free School Lunch
 Reduced School Lunch
 Not Applicable

2. Family Size: (How many people, related to you by blood or marriage, lived in your home during the past 6 months? Include yourself.)

- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 Other _____

3. Your Income (Applicant’s income) for the last 6 months only: \$ _____

(Total wages earned, not hourly wage. If nothing, enter “0”)

4. Your Family’s Income for the last 6 months only: \$ _____

Include as income: Pre-tax gross wages, net income from self-employment, rental income, and pensions including Veterans, dividends, interest, grants, SSDI, OASDI, alimony and/or worker’s compensation. **Do NOT include as income:** any form of public assistance including SSI payments, child support, tax refunds, loans, one-time gifts, unemployment compensation, foster child payments, and/or HUD rental assistance.

5. Assistance

If you and/or your parent or guardian receive any of the following assistance, complete the section below.

Type of Assistance	Case Number	Date Began		Monthly Amount
Foster Child Allowance	#	Month	Year	
MFIP/TANF	#	Month	Year	
General Assistance	#	Month	Year	
Food Stamps	#	Month	Year	
Refugee Cash Assistance	#	Month	Year	

6. Additional Information

Answering the following questions will help STEP-UP to access funding to serve targeted student populations. Checking the items below WILL NOT HAVE ANY EFFECT on your acceptance to the program.

- Do you have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) at school or do you have a physical, mental, learning, emotional or behavioral disability? Yes No
- Are you pregnant or are you a parent? Yes No
- Have you committed a crime and/or been involved with the juvenile justice system? Yes No
- Are you currently taking English Language Learner (ELL) classes? Yes No
- Have you ever or are you currently receiving foster care services? Yes No
- Are you currently homeless? Yes No

Part Five: Parent and Youth Agreement

All youth under 18 at the time this application is submitted must have parent/guardian permission to participate in STEP-UP. The parent/guardian must read and complete all sections of this page. If you are currently 18 or older, you may complete this section yourself.

Youth (Applicant) Name: _____ Phone: _____

If I am not selected for STEP-UP, I give STEP-UP permission to release my contact information to other youth employment providers. Yes No

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Phone: _____

Does your child have a special need or health condition that may affect their worksite assignment or participation in STEP-UP? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Parent Permission Statement

- I hereby give my permission for my child to participate in STEP-UP activities that may lead to employment and training opportunities.
- I understand that youth participants may be referred to various non-city agencies or employers.
- Although public transportation may be provided to the participant, I understand that the City of Minneapolis and AchieveMpls will not supervise youth participants at those times.
- I voluntarily release the City of Minneapolis, AchieveMpls, Minneapolis Workforce Centers and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board from any and all liability based on claimed negligence at times when the youth participant is not under the supervision of the aforementioned parties.
- I further state that I have read this application and that it is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- I agree to provide, if requested, any documentation necessary to verify information on this form and I authorize the City of Minneapolis and AchieveMpls or their providers to verify information provided, if necessary.
- I give my permission to the Minneapolis Public Schools to release benchmark tests and other information to the City of Minneapolis and AchieveMpls or their providers as required for participation in STEP-UP.
- I agree that STEP-UP youth participants shall not claim any right to unemployment compensation resulting from any termination of employment or from any other event.
- I agree that my child may be photographed and/or video recorded to promote STEP-UP or his/her employer.
- I agree that my child may take part in program evaluations.

By signing below, I attest that I have read, understand, and agree with the information and statements within this application. Warning: Title 18, Part 1, Chapter 47, Section 1001 of the U.S. Code - Fraud and False Statements, makes it a criminal offense to make false statements or misrepresentations to any departments or agency of the U.S. as to matter within its jurisdictions.

Youth Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(Required)

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(Required for youth under 18)

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your goals and ambitions for the next three years?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- What is your most important achievement or accomplishment?
- Give three words your friends would use to describe you.
- What are your favorite and least favorite classes in school? Why?
- What is the single biggest strength you will bring to a position?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What skills can you bring to our company?
- What do you look for in a job?
- How do you handle pressure?
- What motivates you to do well at work?
- In your opinion, what goes into good team work?
- Would you rather work alone or in a group?
- Why did you leave your last job? (Why did you decide to leave your current job?)
- What was your greatest challenge at your last job?
- What is the most important thing you have learned in a past work experience?
- What did you like/dislike most about your last job?
- Have you ever had a disagreement with a boss? If so, please explain.
- When was a time you had to admit you were wrong?
- Tell me about the last time you made a mistake. What did you learn from it?
- How would you handle a conflict with a co-worker?
- If an older co-worker was doing something that seemed dangerous or inappropriate for work, what would you do?
- Tell me about a time when you went beyond what was expected.
- Tell me about a time when your integrity was tested.

Appendix E: Feedback Form



STEP-UP Mock Interview Feedback Form Students should keep this form for their records

Please evaluate the interviewee's interview on the following items using the scale below:

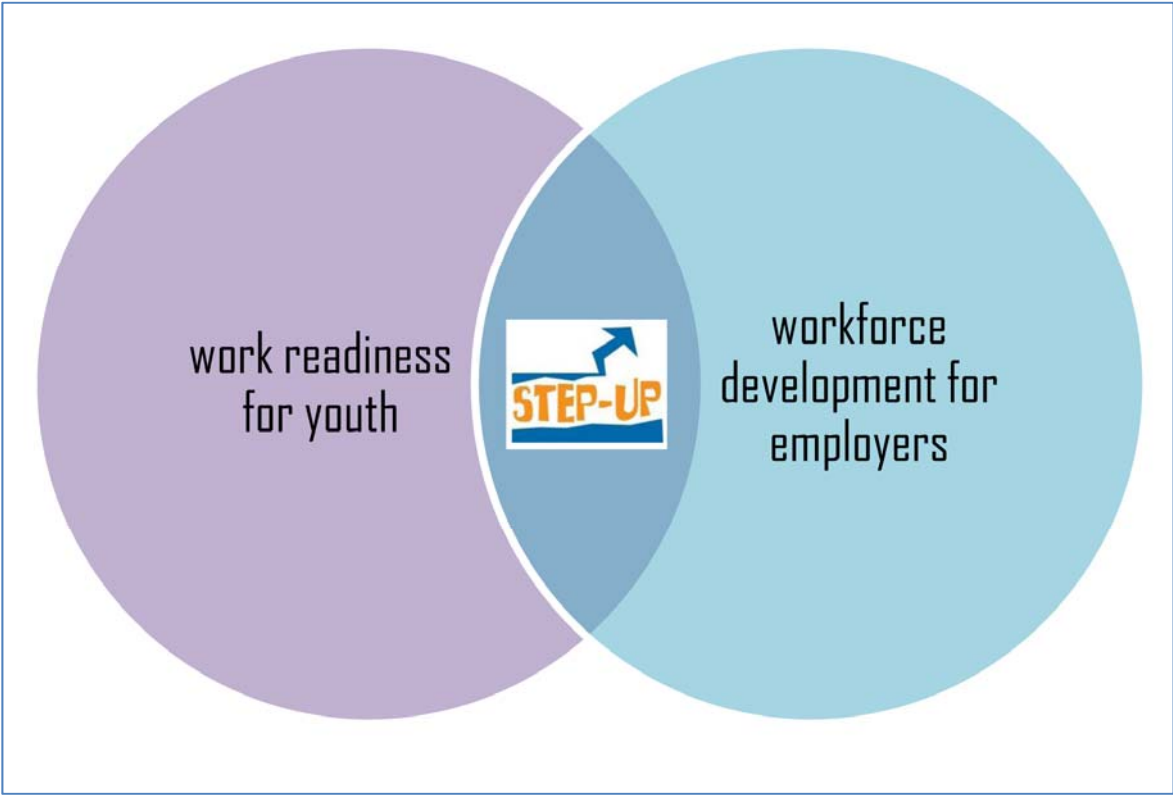
- 1 = Needs Improvement 3 = Average
2 = Below Average 4 = Above Average

Category:	Comments:
A. Self Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate dress 1 2 3 4 • Grooming and hygiene 1 2 3 4 	
B. Nonverbal Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handshake & eye contact 1 2 3 4 • Posture 1 2 3 4 	
C. Oral Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, audible speech 1 2 3 4 • Organized thoughts 1 2 3 4 • Word choice/diction 1 2 3 4 	
D. Interpersonal Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence 1 2 3 4 • Politeness 1 2 3 4 	
E. Working with Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks respectfully of others 1 2 3 4 • Avoids stereotypes of others 1 2 3 4 	
F. Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-prepared 1 2 3 4 • Eager to work 1 2 3 4 	
Overall Rating 1 2 3 4	
Additional comments & suggestions:	
Interviewer Name _____	Company Name _____

Appendix G: 2011 Persistence Rate Summary

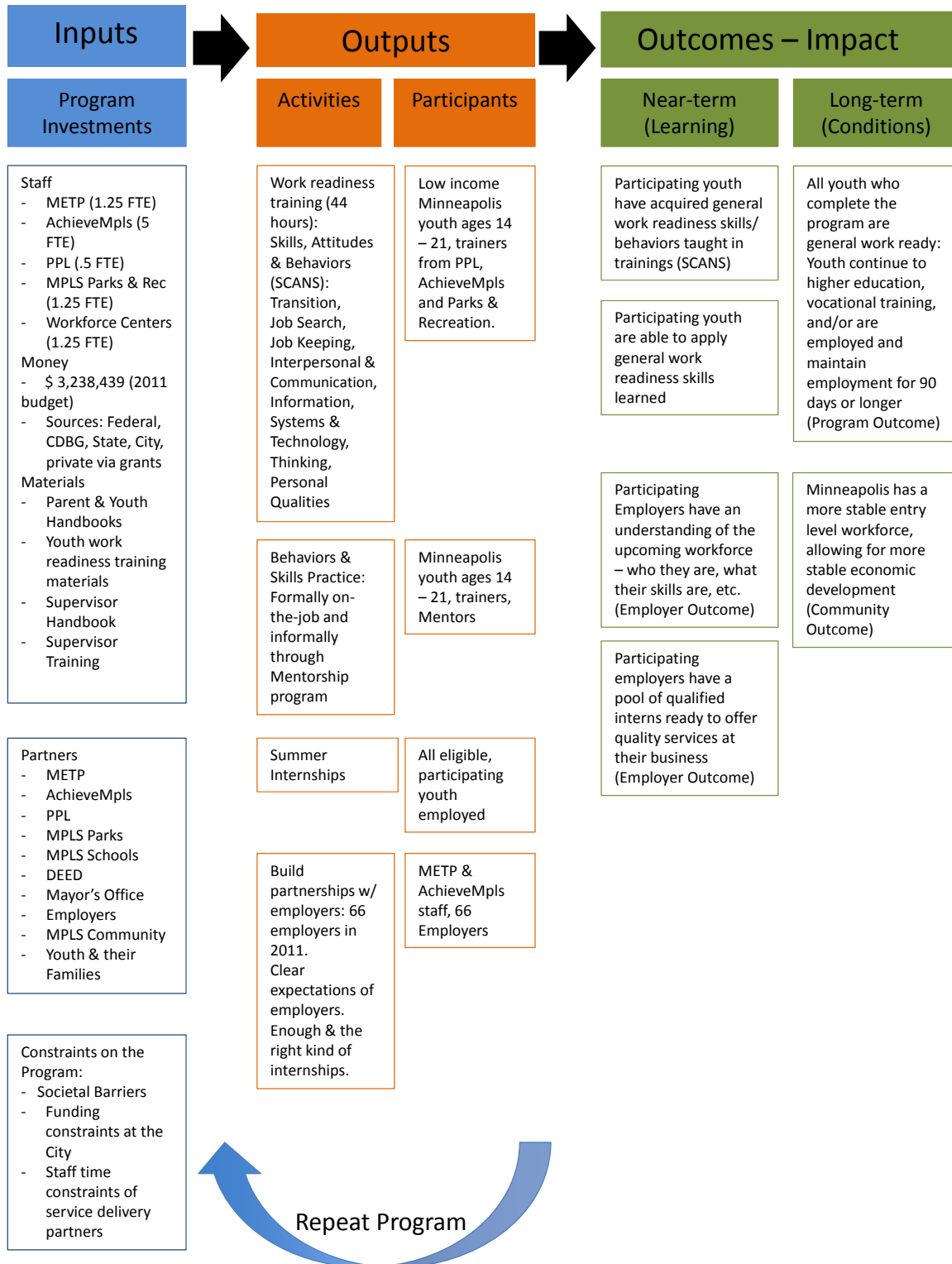
	<u>Discover</u>		<u>Achieve</u>
	Group 1 (PPL)	Group 2	
Accepted	485	722	1415
Began Training	382	549	1085
% Began/Accepted	79%	76%	77%
Completed Training	304	468	890
% Completed/Began Training	80%	85%	82%
Placed in Internship	599		705
% Placed/Completed Training	78%		79%
Completed Internship	595		681
% Completed Internship/Placed	99%		97%

Appendix H: Venn Diagram



Appendix I: Logic Model

STEP-UP As a Youth-Centered Continuum

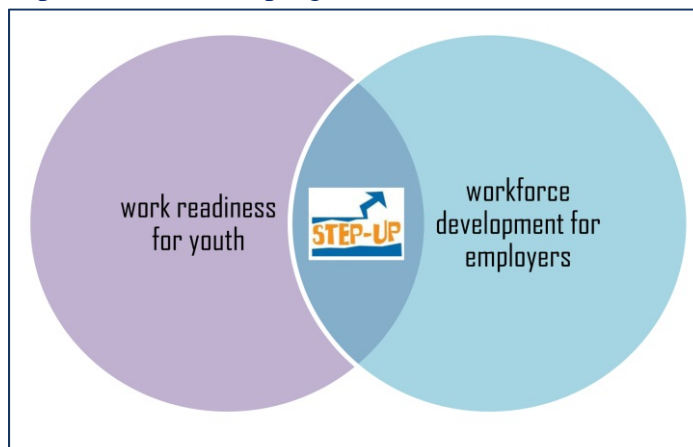


**Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota
By Leif Anderson, Ann Aronson, Liz Krough and Andrea Mac Arthur**

THE PROJECT

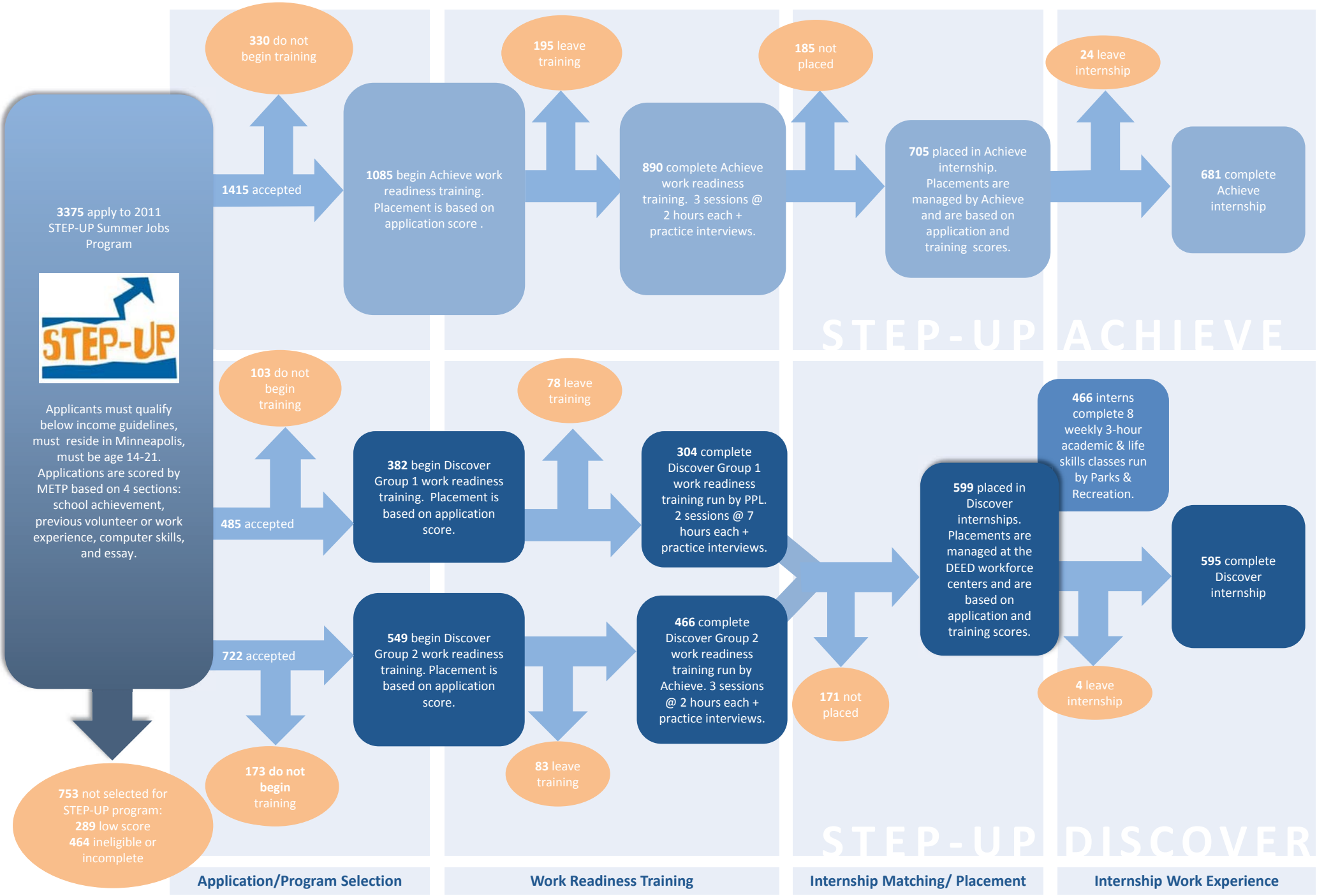
In the eight years since its founding, the STEP-UP summer youth employment program has served over 14,000 Minneapolis youth, providing an experience that pairs work readiness training with 8-weeks of paid internship at a Minneapolis business or non-profit. STEP-UP, a city government initiative of the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP), relies on partnership with AchieveMpls in the operation of the program, as well as with a range of public, non-profit and private sector partners that teach, place, hire and supervise the low-income youth served by STEP-UP.

Using a meta-evaluation framework, the consulting team set out to identify the strengths and opportunity areas in the STEP-UP program. The intent of the 15-week project was to provide STEP-UP program leaders a high level analysis, identifying areas that warrant deeper study and making first-level recommendations for improvement of the program. The team's meta-evaluation uncovered several key findings. Most notable was the tension between two stated program goals: to prepare youth for meaningful work experiences; and to develop the next-generation workforce for Minneapolis employers. The mission and vision of STEP-UP are neither clear, nor shared by all program partners. In some ways the program design and structure actually work against program goals.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

One of the central efforts of the consulting team's meta-evaluation work was to synthesize, document and understand STEP-UP's complex program architecture. From the first days of the project, initial documents and data gathered from METP staff and AchieveMpls underscored the separate nature of the two key program tracks under a STEP-UP "umbrella." STEP-UP Discover serves youth ages 14-21 with work readiness training and City-subsidized summer internship opportunities in public and non-profit settings. STEP-UP Achieve offers youth ages 16-21 a separate work readiness training curriculum and employer-paid summer internship opportunities in the private sector. The consulting team diagrammed the program activities of these two tracks into four phases that comprise the experience of STEP-UP: Application/Program Selection; Work Readiness Training; Internship Matching/Placement; and Internship Work Experience.



First-Level Recommendations:

1. Adopt one vision, with youth at the center.

Create a clear and synthesizing mission that navigates the tension between the goals of STEP-UP Discover and STEP-UP Achieve. STEP-UP must have a clear and synthesizing vision to succeed as an umbrella organization under which multiple programs and partners serve. A vision such as “every youth work ready” would provide a strong foundation for a continuum of programming that is youth-centered, maximizing the overlap between youth work readiness and economic development.

2. Design STEP-UP as a youth-centered continuum.

A comprehensive and youth-centered vision does more than provide a common goal for all the program partners; it ultimately challenges the design of STEP-UP. Putting youth at the center requires training that meets all income-eligible youth “where they are,” regardless of their developmental training levels, and presents internship opportunities that represent every sector of the workforce. To meet this commitment, STEP-UP must move beyond its origins as discrete programs — programs that are visible under the STEP-UP umbrella as separate tracks for participating youth: AchieveMpls’ original STEP-UP (selective) and the METP’s summer youth internships (low-income).

3. Improve program elements of work readiness training, internship placement process, and CLASS training.

Deepen engagement with the families of participating youth, and consider a mentorship component. A cohort model is also worthy of further consideration.