

BrookLynk: A Place-Based Strategy to Increase Employment in the Public Sector

Proposal for Partnership submitted to Hennepin Workforce

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Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth

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Project Goals

1. BrookLynk will coordinate and develop subsidized or partially subsidized living wage internships with public sector employers; up to 50 in 2017, and up to 50 in 2018.
2. We will include all Alliance members in the public sector; Hennepin Technical College, North Hennepin Community College, City of Brooklyn Center, City of Brooklyn Park, Osseo Area Schools, Brooklyn Center Schools, Robbinsdale Area Schools and Anoka-Hennepin Schools, and Hennepin County.
3. Eliminate employment gaps youth with barriers in Brooklyns & Increase racial and ethnic diversity in public sectors; specifically youth who live in or go to school in Brooklyn Center or Brooklyn Park.
4. Increase pathways to college and career by completing a BrookLynk summer internship and training.
5. Partner with Hennepin County contracted providers to target County Involved Youth – creating a pipeline for these youth into summer employment and college programming.

Budget

- \$132,000 in 2017
- \$132,000 in 2018** not yet committed to
- To be used for:
 - o **Internships** are \$15/hour, 15-30 hours/week, 6-8 weeks long. Fully subsidized internships cost between \$1,350 - \$3,600. This budget represents an average of \$2,400 per internship.

- \$12,000 will be provided January 2017 and January 2018 with an invoice from BrookLynk to support the **staff** salary's required to execute this work.

Subsidized Internship Pledges

- Each Alliance member has provided an estimate of the number of internships they could provide if subsidized the summer of 2017.
- While the majority were able to provide \$15/hour internships, the one's highlighted below cannot. We request that for these employers a range of \$9.50-\$15 be approved.
- At this time there are more internships pledged than can be funded. Securing internships is an iterative process that will change before next summer. Reasons for changes include:
 1. Employers budgets can change – they might be able to fund more, or fund fewer,
 2. Staff that can supervise may change, or be added; this means they might have to delete or add youth interns where there are supervisors capable of hiring.

*50 of these internships will be funded through this proposal.

Public Sector Employer	2015	2016	2017	2018
North Hennepin Community College	1	3	8	9
Hennepin Technical College	3	0	8	8
Brooklyn Center Area Schools	3	6	4	5
Osseo Area Schools	0	10	10	10
Anoka-Hennepin Schools	0	0	10	10
Robbinsdale Area Schools	0	0	3	6
City of Brooklyn Center	3	2	8	8
City of Brooklyn Park	5	8	18	18
Hennepin County	5	10	4	4
Total Public Sector Internships	21	44	73*	78*

Requests

1. **We request that Hennepin County Libraries be allotted resources from this proposal. Brookdale Library and Brooklyn Park library are two great locations for BrookLynk interns. We wish to use funds to ensure that we can provide internships for youth at these locations.**
2. **We request that for Anoka-Hennepin Schools they are allowed to provide internships below \$15.**
3. **We request that \$12,000 in administration costs can be provided January of 2017 and January of 2018.**

Background

In 2013, The Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth (the Alliance) was formed as a joint powers agreement between the City of Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Hennepin County, and the school districts of Osseo, Brooklyn Center, Robbinsdale and Anoka-Hennepin. Ex Officio Members include: Hennepin Technical College & North Hennepin Community College. BrookLynk was launched through funds contributed and raised by this partner network, and with the support of Youthprise, United Way, Pohlad Foundation and 20 other community contributions.

Year 1 evaluation results showed that 100% of employers who hosted interns said the youth provided great benefits to their organization, and 100% of youth said that they would recommend BrookLynk to a friend. This illustrates 1) the capacity of the Alliance to build and implement high quality programs and 2) the great value add that young people provide when included in the workforce.

Since that successful first year, the number of businesses committed to providing internships has doubled. The success of BrookLynk hinges on participation from both youth and employers. In the second year the program again exceeded internships participation goals. Additional data on program quality and the impact on participants suggest that while there are areas for program quality to improve, participants were positively impacted.

2016 Youth Participation

BrookLynk served youth 14-21 this year (expanding the age range to serve older youth) who were underserved and had at least one barrier to employment. We also targeted youth were identified as Opportunity Youth (out of mainstream school or county involved youth).

- 399 youth applied for Get Ready! Work Readiness Training, almost double the number from last year.
- 136 youth completed the Get Ready!, which is a 70% increase from 2015.
- 62 youth were matched to and began summer internship opportunities. This year's goal was 50.
- 58 youth completed the entire summer internship (a 94% completion rate).

2016 Community Participation

The following 21 education, business, and community partners offered internships and supervisors/mentors for youth (compared to 12 last year).

Education Partners

- Brooklyn Center Community Schools
- Earle Brown Elementary School
- North Hennepin Community College
- Osseo Area Schools

Business Partners

- Allen Property Services, LLC
- Amplifon, Inc.
- Boston Scientific
- Christy's Auto Service
- FASTSIGNS
- McDonald's
- Topline Federal Credit Union

Community Partners

- Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth
- City of Brooklyn Center Building and Community Standards
- City of Brooklyn Center Community Activities, Recreation & Services
- City of Brooklyn Park Economic Development and Housing
- City of Brooklyn Park Cities United
- City of Brooklyn Park Zanewood Recreation Center
- Hennepin County Assessor's Office
- Hennepin County Brookdale Service Center
- Hennepin County Children's Services
- Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department
- Hennepin County Public Works
- Hennepin County Veterans Services
- YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities

2016 Youth Outcomes

Participating youth gained work readiness and social-emotional learning skills, financial benefits, and social connections. The majority of youth were satisfied with their internship experiences.

- 100% of interns would recommend BrookLynk to a friend
- 95% of interns agreed that they received enough training and support to successfully complete their internships
- 82% of interns stated that their internship helped them increase the number of professionals in their social network
- Interns rated the BrookLynk program 4.3 out of 5 (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)
- Interns rated supervisors 4.5 out of 5 (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)
- 77% of supervisors said their intern(s) were prepared to enter the workforce
- 70% of interns were rated by their supervisors as having gained all 14 assessed career skills
- The median internship salary was \$1400
- Of last year's BrookLynk interns we followed-up with:
 - 82% of eligible seniors graduated
 - 86% of those that graduated will be in college
 - 64% were employed this summer

2016 Business Outcomes

Employers were satisfied with the program and their intern(s).

- 92% of supervisors would like to participate in the BrookLynk program again
- Over 90% of supervisors reported that they were satisfied with the support they received from BrookLynk
- 73% of supervisors responded that their interns were the best part of their internship experiences
- Almost 85% stated that their interns were good matches for their organizations
- 77% of supervisors reported that their interns met or exceeded their expectations of job responsibilities and workload

“(Our interns) put in the work needed to get the job done, and really tried their best. It was great to work with them, to guide them, and to learn together as a team between adults and youth.”

This project is an opportunity for Hennepin County to advance their place based workforce development strategy by launching a public/private partnership for community-wide change to expand economic opportunities for all in Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park.

BrookLynk Program Model

The BrookLynk program will expand to create more opportunities for diverse youth, who have a high unemployment rate, to get their first job in the public sector. This job experience allows them to gain skills, puts them on a trajectory towards a career, and helps them to gain income.

BrookLynk is an employment program that serves youth aged 14-21 in Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park (the Brooklyns). BrookLynk was launched in response to the roughly 10,000 young people in the Brooklyns who face barriers to employment and would benefit from workforce development services. This program currently provides a 1-day work readiness training and paid internships for 6-8 weeks in the summer.

In the last year, public sector partners have expressed interest in providing internships for youth with barriers, but do not have adequate funding to expand. In partnership with Hennepin Workforce, The Alliance, and BrookLynk will continue to cultivate a strong network of businesses in the public sector to provide entry level positions during the summer.

By connecting youth with their first job:

- Youth gain experience that increases their income and builds their resume
- Youth develop cross-racial economically diverse networks of adults to support their careers
- Businesses, especially those in the public sector, will benefit from contributions from young, talented, diverse staff
- Businesses broaden their hiring practices to increase the inclusion of young employees

Community Need

BrookLynk serves youth aged 14-21 who live or go to school in Brooklyn Center or Brooklyn Park and come from low-income families and/or who face barriers to employment. BrookLynk was built from the Step-Up Minneapolis model. There are several key data that help us understand the unique needs of youth in our community:

Suburbanization of Poverty

Nationwide, poverty is spreading out of the urban core into surrounding suburbs. For the first time, the Met Council identified the suburbs of Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park as concentrated areas of poverty. These communities lack the infrastructure and capacity to provide human services to this changing population. Statistically speaking we know that:

- There are roughly 10,000 youth 14-21 who would be eligible for employment
- 13% of families in the Brooklyns live in poverty (household income of <\$25k)
- 33% of families in the Brooklyns live at or below 185% of poverty (<\$45)
- The Brooklyns are 50% persons of color

High Youth Unemployment Rates

Statewide data collected by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development illustrates the difficulty youth, and especially youth of color face in trying to obtain employment. Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park sits at the crux of this issue, as these communities continue to grow in diversity and become increasingly younger. The unemployment rate for adults in Minnesota is 3.5%, while the unemployment rate for youth aged 16-19 is 9.1%. Even more staggeringly, African American youth are experiencing a 14.1% unemployment rate.

Lack of Resources for Career Preparation

In 2015 the Alliance completed a scan of all the College and Career resources in our community and schools. Results indicated that connectivity and coordination between high schools, local colleges and out-of-school time work experience programs is fragmented. The study found that resources that prepare youth for career are provided far less frequently than college preparation.

Table 1 provides a more detailed look into the types of resources that are offered to youth through the facilities in our scan related to developing their plans and getting prepared for college and career.

Table 1: College and Career Opportunities in the Brooklyns

College	
Resources that Pipeline Youth Towards College Attendance	
Higher Education Information for 2-Year Community and Technical Colleges	77%
Higher Education Information for 4-Year Colleges and Universities	73%
Higher Education Information for Career Training or Certificate Programs	68%
College Application Help	64%
Preparation for College Entrance Exams	50%
Financial Aid Assistance for First Year Tuition	50%
Financial Aid Assistance for All Years of Tuition	27%
Career	
Resources that Pipeline Youth Towards Career Fields	
Career Information, such as Job Outlook and Pay	64%
Application or Resume Help	55%
Assistance with Interview Skills	45%
Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) Online Database	32%
Employment Postings	32%
Information on Job Shadow or Apprenticeship Opportunities	18%
Information on Internship Opportunities	14%

Gap in Opportunities

While youth in Minneapolis can access a variety of youth employment programs (Step-Up, Genesys Works, Cookie Cart, JobCorps, Juxtaposition Arts, YMCA, Teen Teamworks or Rock Your Block) there is only one County funded youth employment provider for all of Suburban Hennepin County. We know from our Youth to Youth survey that from 2008-2012 youth interest in employment activities or training have increased by 49%, yet the number of programs providing these resources have not increased.

In the midst of these challenges, local leaders, institutions and businesses and youth are working together to make change that ensures young people’s success now and in the future. They understand

that a thriving community is everyone's responsibility, and are investing funds and time to build new opportunities that drive change.

Collaborative Partners

The mission of the Alliance partners is to coordinate high quality afterschool opportunities that increases graduation rates, increases pathways to college and career and decreases young people's experience of violence.

Our goals are to 1) Increase access to high quality afterschool programs, 2) Build sustainable resources that reduce opportunity gaps, 3) Coordinate partnerships to improve youth services, and 4) Engage Youth in all aspects of our work.

BrookLynk youth employment program exists to connect youth in the Brooklyns facing barriers to employment with the skills, experience and professional social networks they need to develop their pathway to college and career.

The Alliance has leveraged our network of Alliance Joint Powers members to build this program and is committed to engaging the community to increase pathways to college and career.

Direct staff supporting this expansion will include:

- Alliance Executive Director
- City of Brooklyn Park, Director of Development
- Alliance Data and Quality Coordinator
- Network of College and Career Centers
- BrookLynk Program Coordinator
- BrookLynk Program Associate
- BrookLynk Steering committee consisting of youth, city staff and technical advisors from Step-Up Minneapolis providing direction and input.
- A diverse (race, class, age, gender, & role) group of stakeholders: Youth participants, City partners, Mayors, Businesses and subject matter experts in positive youth development and youth employment that inform our program design and implementation.

The Cities of Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park are significant stakeholders. The City of Brooklyn Park is the fiscal agent for the Alliance as per our Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). They provide the Alliance financial, IT, and HR support. Our office space is provided in-kind by the City of Brooklyn Center, also a member of the JPA. The economic health and vitality of the community is under their purview, and they have been strong proponents of launching the program since the initial visioning process in 2014. BrookLynk is on track to transition to become a program of both cities by 2018 housed at the City of Brooklyn Park Economic Development department. Both Mayors are champions of this program and are carefully planning a year-long transition to ensure the program is sustainably funded and continues to deliver results. Long term, these cities intend to invest annually to fund BrookLynk. This grant will continue to be implemented after transition to the City of Brooklyn Park. Because Brooklyn Park is our fiscal agent, the contract legally stays with the same entity.

BrookLynk is connected with the Economic Development department and of each city – with their objectives and networks. The Economic Development departments at each city already have thriving and long-standing relationships with businesses through the Chambers of Commerce. Utilizing these strong ties and infrastructure BrookLynk will be a cost-effective model.