



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Youthpraise Announces \$3.75 million in Grants through the Social Innovation Fund – Opportunity Reboot**

*Six Organizations Receive Grants to Create Career Pathways for Minnesota Youth*

**Minneapolis, MN** - Youthpraise announced today \$3.75 million in grants to connect Minnesota's opportunity youth with services and support that will lead to careers in high demand, like IT, health care, construction and manufacturing. The project, Opportunity Reboot, targets youth ages 14-24 who are either homeless, in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system or disconnected from school and work. An additional focus is on building social-emotional skills to strengthen education and career outcomes.

This funding opportunity was made possible through a 3-year \$3 million Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant to Youthpraise for Opportunity Reboot. SIF is an initiative of the Corporation for National and Community Service that is focused on improving the lives of people in low-income communities throughout the United States. Youthpraise was one of eight intermediaries across the country to receive a SIF grant in 2015. SIF funds must be matched dollar for dollar and Opportunity Reboot sub-grantees must also provide a dollar for dollar match, resulting in an additional \$5.4 million in funding being leveraged.

Youthpraise received requests of more than \$71 million from 23 organizations statewide. Using a peer review panel process, Youthpraise engaged individuals from the community, youth workers, youth, and foundation partners to recommend projects. Key partners in the project – Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) - Office of Youth

Development, Search Institute and the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (MPM) also participated in the review.

Six organizations from across Minnesota were selected to receive 3-year grants ranging from \$193,000 to \$234,000 annually. Grantees are from Saint Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, Northfield and Sauk Rapids. Funded organizations are implementing evidence-based models and utilizing a career pathways approach. The goal is to build the evidence on which models are most successful in reaching disconnected youth so they can be brought to scale so more youth can benefit.

“We are very pleased to support six high-performing organizations that will prepare Minnesota youth for jobs in high demand industries,” commented Marcus Pope, Youthprise Director of Partnerships and External Relations. “In the face of a 40% reduction in federal funding for youth workforce development in Minnesota, Opportunity Reboot is a much needed initiative that can help reduce economic disparities in our state.”

“The organizations selected by Youthprise are an extremely great fit for the Social Innovation Fund. We’re especially impressed by how young people were engaged in the decision-making process right from the start working alongside local philanthropic leaders to select these sub-grantees. Certainly, when young people can be hired for high-demand careers in IT, healthcare, construction and manufacturing, the entire state of Minnesota benefits. All of this training potentially creates financial independence and lays the foundation for future life success,” said Damian Thorman, Director of the Social Innovation Fund.

### **List of Opportunity Reboot grantees and the purpose of their grants:**

**Amherst H. Wilder Foundation:** Three-year grant totaling \$615,000 (\$205,000 annually) to support culturally competent employment and educational programs and wraparound services for 44 to 65 homeless youth at Prior Crossing, a youth housing facility in Saint Paul, MN. Youth will be provided with: (a) a safe and supportive housing environment, (b) youth development programming, (c) culturally-competent, strengths-based case management, (d) connections to educational opportunities, (e) workforce development training, and (f) facilitated connections to employment and internship opportunities. *Saint Paul, Minnesota*

Contact: Lindsay Bacher, 651-280-2380, [lindsay.bacher@wilder.org](mailto:lindsay.bacher@wilder.org)

**Guadalupe Alternative Program (GAP):** Three-year grant totaling \$600,000 (\$200,000 annually) to scale up a YouthBuild model for over 100 participants from Saint Paul’s West Side, Dayton’s Bluff, Payne-Phalen, and Greater East Side neighborhoods. GAP’s YouthBuild program supports young adults’ (ages 18-24) lives by giving them the tools and credentials needed to achieve school, career, and life success. The program provides comprehensive wraparound services along with secondary and post-secondary education, workforce preparation, and credentialing. In addition, participants have access to academic and social-emotional supports in-house, and from partnerships with multiple community agencies and education institutions. *Saint Paul, Minnesota*

Contact: Jody Nelson, 651-222-0757 x 318, [jnelson@gapschool.org](mailto:jnelson@gapschool.org)

**Initiative Foundation/Sauk Rapids-Rice School District:** Three-year grant totaling \$618,000 (\$206,000 annually) to develop and implement a collaborative model for secondary students who are disconnected from school and education, and thus, at risk of dropping out. The project will implement the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model (I-BEST) to serve 166 young people age 14-20, all of whom are economically disadvantaged and/or disconnected from school, 50% of who are from communities of color and 25% who have disabilities. Partnering organization staff will work collaboratively with school staff to provide mentoring, authentic internship experiences, and career guidance support. *Sauk Rapids, Minnesota*  
Contact: Dr. Daniel Bittman, 320-217-4564, daniel.bittman@isd47.org

**Migizi Communications:** Three-year grant totaling \$702,000 (\$234,000 annually) to support the Green Jobs Pathway that will involve 60 disconnected Indian youth per year to receive education, training, supports, and experiences needed to prepare them to become financially independent, self-determining adults. The project will utilize the Back On Track model developed by Jobs for the Future to create a career pathway for American Indian youth to discover their cultural role as caretakers of the Earth, develop strong workplace skills, learn through their experience, and complete postsecondary coursework and credentials of value to secure living wage jobs as they build a career in the Green Economy. *Minneapolis, Minnesota* Contact: Elaine Salinas, 612-721-6631 x205, elaine@migizi.org

**Northfield Healthy Community Initiative:** Three-year grant totaling \$579,000 (\$193,000 annually) to launch the “Tri-City Bridges to the Future” initiative, a new collaborative in Faribault, Red Wing, and Northfield, including the MN Correctional Facility-Red Wing. The initiative will offer career pathways approaches for 85 youth ages 14-24 in the three cities who are in foster care; involved in the juvenile justice system; are homeless; and/or are disconnected from school and work. The primary focus is high school completion with dual enrollment options through partnerships with area higher education institutions and postsecondary training in career clusters that have clear pathways to higher degrees. *Northfield, Minnesota* Contact: Zach Pruitt, 507-664-3524, zach@northfieldhcci.org

**SOAR Career Solutions:** Three-year grant totaling \$636,000 (\$212,000 annually) is a partnership between SOAR, Life House, the Duluth Workforce Center, Adult Basic Education, ISD 709, Lake Superior College and Woodland Hills. This project will increase employment readiness skills for “Opportunity Youth” ages 16-24 through stabilization supports (i.e. mental health, chemical dependency health, housing, food, clothing), relationship building, career exploration services, work experiences, soft-skills training, self-awareness trainings, education and employment opportunities. This project incorporates transitional and traditional employment readiness models in order to meet individualized needs of youth. *Duluth, Minnesota* Contact: Emily Edison, 218-625-2412, eedison@soarcareers.org.

### **About Youthprise**

*Founded in 2010 by the McKnight Foundation, Youthprise is a nonprofit intermediary that invests in the future of Minnesota by investing in youth. The organization works on multiple levels: supporting nonprofit organizations that serve youth; aligning efforts through citywide and statewide initiatives; and providing opportunities directly to young people. Grounded in a commitment to addressing racial disparities, Youthprise works to increase young people’s opportunities for learning and social emotional development, economic prosperity, and health and safety.*

**About the Social Innovation Fund**

*The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) unites public and private resources to evaluate and grow innovative community-based solutions with evidence of results. The SIF and its private-sector partners have invested more than half a billion dollars in compelling community solutions. As a result, the SIF has awarded grants to more than 35 community-based organizations and over 180 nonprofits working in 37 states and the District of Columbia. Authorized by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act in April of 2009, the Social Innovation Fund is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency focused on improving lives, strengthening communities, and fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering. CNCS engages more than five million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. Since 1994, more than 830,000 Americans have provided more than 1 billion hours of service to their communities and country through AmeriCorps. Together, service and innovation provide a vehicle to harness the power of ordinary people and unleash the potential of innovative ideas to help address our communities' toughest social problems and transform lives.*

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