

# 30,000 Feet Direct Appropriation

Legislative Report

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## Program Overview

30,000 Feet is focused on addressing educational disparities faced by African American students in St. Paul, ensuring that all students are able to achieve their full potential. Its objectives are to increase academic achievement among students, reveal and nurture students’ artistic skills, and use art as a way to improve literacy outcomes. 30,000 Feet works towards this goal by providing culturally responsive academic tutoring and social and emotional development to elementary (K through 3rd grade) students during the school year, and enrichment activities during the summer. 30,000 Feet also provides a coding program targeted at high school students, including those who have had involvement with the justice system. The legislative direct appropriation primarily focuses on providing individualized services to youth ages 14 through 24 and supports 30,000 Feet’s partnership with Ramsey County to provide job opportunities to youth who have contact with Juvenile Delinquency system.

### Legislative Appropriation

Funds for this project are appropriated in [Minnesota Session Laws – 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 10, S.F. 9, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 3(ll)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2021/1/Session+Law/Chapter/10/). The amount available to 30,000 Feet for SFY 2023 is **$237,500**. (DEED is permitted to retain up to 5% of the $250,000 appropriation for administration and monitoring of the grant.)

### Program Eligibility

In accordance with the language appropriating these funds, allowable activities include:

* Providing paid work experience opportunities to youth;
* Offering after-school programming; and
* Providing programming that prevents summer learning loss for African American youth.

In addition, 30,000 Feet has prioritized services to youth who have barriers to employment, live below the federal poverty line, and/or have had contact with the juvenile delinquency system.

### Program Activities

Youth ages 14-24 were recruited for 30,000 Feet’s tech apprenticeship program. The youth who participated in this program work 20 hours a week in a paid position. To accommodate shifts caused by the COVID-19 health emergency, work opportunities were provided in hybrid formats. In order to provide hybrid options, 30,000 Feet partners with Comcast to provide internet access codes to participants. Youth were also provided Chromebooks in order to complete program activities, school activities, and work experiences. These wraparound services in addition to transportation support allowed youth to complete programming and retain youth in the program to help ensure successful outcomes. Program participants who are 18 years or older are supported with paid work experiences if needed, or they start their full-time careers in IT fields at companies such as Software for Good or Treat and Company. Youth have the ability to complete code academy certificates which are industry recognized credentials that allow the youth to enter into the tech field without needing a college degree.

Culturally-relevant pedagogy and practices are core aspects of 30,000 Feet’s programming. Specifically, engaging and meeting students where they are at academically, socially, and economically served as a critical strategy to retaining youth in programming. 30,000 Feet staff used participants’ school IEPs, transcripts, and parent knowledge to better understand the needs of each youth. As a result of this, the program model adjusted to in order to create specialized learning environments, implementing academic learning breaks, decreasing group sizes, increasing the intensity and interval of on-on-one academic supports, and providing peer-to-peer support to meet students’ social needs. This was also bolstered by creating a positive, supportive environment that lifts all students up and supports them in achieving their goals. To address mental health related needs of youth participants, 30,000 Feet provides modified environments to better support youth including quiet areas and

30,000 Feet also provides group services.[[1]](#footnote-1) These services were provided to elementary aged youth and were focused on language arts and literacy. The curriculum used by 30,000 Feet aligns with Minnesota’s K-5 Language Arts standards and is based on phonics-driven literacy instruction. Students work on skills such as sequencing, retelling, identifying story elements in a text, using literature to support their understanding of African culture and life in Africa, poetry, narrative writing, and history. This part of programming aligns with the legislative intent of providing programming that prevents summer learning loss to African American youth.

### Business Partnership and Success Stories

While many of their peers spent their summers working retail jobs, high school students Cece and Jacqura were learning JavaScript and SQL, shadowing developers, and attending agile meetings. They spent their summer working at HealthPartners learning more about technology and experiencing what it’s like to work in a professional setting. Andy Wilde, Senior Technology Director with Health Partners said, “We’ve had a successful college intern program for many years but wanted to find a way to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to explore careers in technology. We’ve never done an internship program with high school students before but working with 30,000 feet has been an opportunity for us to make a difference for students in our community.” Jeremy Johnson, Senior Technology Manager with Health Partners stated, “Our goal is to give the students exposure to technology and the corporate world, and a better sense of what’s interesting to them. If we inspire them to pursue a career in technology someday, even better.” With the help of the 30,000 feet team, the students created resumes and then interviewed for the internships. Team activities, work assignments, and 1:1 mentoring have helped them develop organizational skills, balance their time, and manage responsibility. More importantly, what’s been most valuable to the students is the confidence they’ve built in themselves. Their colleagues’ encouragement to ask questions and share ideas has made them feel welcome, valued, and included. The people have been my favorite part of the internship,” says Jacqura. “The experience is important but interacting in a healthy work environment and seeing how everyone encourages their peers to do better is what I really like about the program.” “I feel very appreciated and welcomed here,” says Cece. “I’m glad to have had this experience, knowing it’s hard to get internship opportunities. It’s a huge honor to be in such a big place with such nice people.” All of the youth in this program, including Cece and Jacqyra, are in ongoing internship work while they are enrolled in college or high school with some completing senior projects for school credit with Health Partners and some continuing to gain valuable tech experience with Health Partners. Cece and Jacqyra are just two examples of youth who have achieved academic and employment success through 30,000 Feet’s programming. In addition, there are six youth who are earning wages at $20/hr at Health Partners.

### Program Data and Outcomes

65% of students have been released from probation with skills to enter the tech field. 30,000 Feet has also helped to decrease recidivism among many youth and their peers by 40% from providing them with a safe welcoming and productive place to be on and off probation.

The data included in this report reflects youth served during State Fiscal Year 2023.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DATA ON PARTICIPANTS SERVED – INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -** (Cumulative for the SFY) | | | |
| **Total Individual Participants Served** | | **153** |  |
| **Gender** | A. Female | 73 | 47% |
| B. Male | 80 | 52% |
| C. Not disclosed | 12 | 7% |
| **Age** | 1. 14 and under | 69 | 45% |
| 1. 14 – 15 | 25 | 16% |
| B. 16 – 17 | 38 | 25% |
| D. 18 – 21 | 20 | 13% |
| E. 22 – 24 | 1 | 0% |
| **Ethnicity / Race** | A. Hispanic/Latino | 1 | 0% |
| B. American Indian or Alaska Native | 0 | 0% |
| C. Asian/Pacific Islander | 8 | 5% |
| D. Black or African American | 130 | 85% |
| E. White | 5 | 3% |
| F. Multiracial | 9 | 5% |
| G. Not Disclosed | 0 | 0% |
| **Education Level** | A. 0 – 12th Grade | 147 | 96% |
| C. High School graduate or equivalent | 4 | 3% |
| D. Post-Secondary Education | 2 | 1% |
| E. Not Employed at Program Enrollment | 52 | 34% |
| **Other Demographics** | 1. Basic Skills Deficient | 101 | 66% |
| 1. Dropout or Potential Dropout | 8 | 5% |
| 1. Economically Disadvantaged | 110 | 72% |
| 1. Youth with a Disability | 7 | 4% |
| 1. Limited English Proficient | 3 | 2% |
| 1. Pregnant or Parenting | 0 | % |
| 1. Offender | 4 | 2% |
| 1. Homeless or Runaway Youth | 1 | 0% |
| 1. Foster Youth (or aged out of foster care) | 0 | 2% |
| 1. Youth from Families Receiving Public Assistance | 110 | 72% |
| **PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -** (Cumulative for the SFY) | | | |
| 1. Received Education, Employment Preparation, or Work Readiness/Job Training Activities (Includes Training in ABE/Remedial, Basic Skills, Classroom, Labor Market Info, Life Skills, and Occupational Skills) | | 45 | 29% |
| 1. Received Work Experience, Internship, or Apprenticeship Activities | | 55 | 36% |
| 1. Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities | | 65 | 42% |
| 1. Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities | | 65 | 42% |
| 1. Received Mentoring Activities | | 67 | 44% |
| 1. Received Support Services | | 92 | 60% |
| 1. Received Financial Literacy Education | | 62 | 41% |
| **INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -** (Cumulative for the SFY) | | | |
| 1. Attained Work Readiness Goals[[2]](#footnote-2) | | 45 | 29% |
| 1. Attained Education Goals | | 40 | 26% |
| 1. Received Academic Credit or Service-Learning Credit | | 5 | 3% |
| 1. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Dropout - Returned to School | | 32 | 21% |
| 1. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military | | 5 | 3% |
| 1. Entered employment | | 8 | 5% |
| 1. Retained employment, increased wages or advanced career | | 29 | 19% |
| 1. Completed Program Objective | | 46 | 30% |
| **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FOR PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -** (Cumulative for the SFY) | | | |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Excellent” | | 33 | 22% |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Very Good” | | 25 | 16% |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Average” | | 6 | 4% |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Below Average” | | 1 | 0% |
| 1. Number of participants rating experience as “Poor” | | 1 | 0% |
| 1. Total Number of Surveys Completed | | 66 | 43% |

1. Note, DEED does not collect individual demographic data on youth served in group services. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Note that this excludes Kindergarten through 3rd grade youth served by 30K Feet. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)