

SFY 2024 Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Direct Appropriation

Progress Report

1/6/2025

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Employment and Training Programs Division

180 E. 5th St., Suite 1200

St. Paul, MN 55101

Kay Tracy [Kay.Tracy@state.mn.us](mailto:Kay.Tracy@state.mn.us)

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# Contents

[Contents 3](#_Toc187242167)

[Introduction 4](#_Toc187242168)

[Summary of Project Activities and Program Goals 4](#_Toc187242169)

[Participant Data 5](#_Toc187242170)

[Demographic Data 5](#_Toc187242171)

[Program Services, Activities, and Other Related Assistance 6](#_Toc187242172)

[Program Outcome Measures 7](#_Toc187242173)

[Expenditure Data 7](#_Toc187242174)

[Program Success Stories 8](#_Toc187242175)

# Introduction

The Minnesota State Legislature appropriated $750,000 to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). DEED retained 5% of the funds, therefore $712,500 was available for MPRB in SFY 24. As stated in [Minnesota Session Laws – 2023, Chapter 53, S.F.3035, Article 20, Section 2, Subdivision 3 (q)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/53/) any unencumbered balance remaining at the end of the first year does not cancel but is available in the second year. The grant proceeds are intended to provide funding for enhanced workforce development activities for MPRB’s Youth Employment and Training Initiatives. This is a one-time appropriation, and the funds are available until June 30, 2027.

# Summary of Project Activities and Program Goals

MPRB’s Youth Employment and Training Initiatives (YETI) has been operating and leading youth employment and training programs for almost 40 years and has employed and trained thousands of teens and young adults. Within the MPRB, Teen Teamworks is the largest youth employment and training program, with smaller youth employment and training programs in Aquatics, Environmental Management, and Community Connections and Violence Prevention. Because this is often a first-time job, YETI provides support to aid in the development of work readiness skills, daily living skills, and build confidence and connections.

MPRB recruits and reaches out to youth through internal partnerships with staff from Recreation, Youth Sports, Community Connections & Violence Prevention, and Youthline (a year around teen-focused program). In addition, MPRB Youth Employment staff participate in job fairs, partner with Minneapolis Public Schools, plus engage partners such as Step Up, Avivo, Emerge and more. MPRB consistently receives more job applications than positions are available for youth, so we know the need is great.

Youth ages 14 to 24 will be served by this program. MPRB employment and training programs employ youth who are under-represented in the workforce, who may be out of school, involved in foster care, juvenile justice system, residing in MFIP households, or have a disability. Based on previous years, the majority of youth come from communities of color, and an estimated 30% of youth employees have disabilities (learning, physical, mental health, etc).

MPRB’s YETI staff have developed and continually update a work readiness curriculum that includes career exploration, resume building, professional communication, financial empowerment, and social skills. In partnership with Independent School District 916, youth in grades 9-12 are eligible to earn up to 2.5 academic credits for a full summer of employment due to the structured learning and clear program goals.

Interns are recruited in a manner similar to those described above, focusing on internal and external partners, and specific recommendations. Criteria used to select internship participants may include review of cover letter and resume, an interview, as well as previous participation in an MPRB youth employment and training program, and recommendation of the applicant’s recent supervisor(s). If the work of an internship focuses on a specific park or area of the City, proximity to that location may be a factor in the selection as the intern could provide local insight to the project or program.

MPRB collaborates with a range of organizations and employment programs including Minnesota CareerForce Center, Step Up, Achieve Twin Cities, Right Track, and BrookLynk to share resources and best practices, and to help ensure work readiness trainings are cohesive between organizations in the region. Collaborations with the University of Minnesota Extension’s Community of Practice and Hennepin County’s Environmental Education Network highlight career trajectories, next step job opportunities, outdoor career exploration fairs and more. MPRB also partners with Independent School District 916, which provides educational support with elective and recovery credits.

#### **Program Goal**

MPRB will launch enhanced youth employment experiences, including the Minneapolis Park Corps, a supported training program for young people ages 18-24 to gain experience and skills and a network in environmental and recreation careers. These positions will lead to exposure to and direct pathways to seasonal and permanent employment with the MPRB and other agencies.

# Participant Data

The participant data for the SFY 24 performance period is below.

## Demographic Data

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC** | **NUMBER SERVED** |
| Total Served | 264 |
| Male | 170 |
| Female | 87 |
| Trans/Other | 7 |
| Age 12-13 | 0 |
| Age 14-15 | 76 |
| Age 16-17 | 122 |
| Age 18-19 | 50 |
| Age 20-21 | 16 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 33 |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 2 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 5 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Black/African American | 139 |
| White | 44 |
| Multi-racial | 31 |
| Other/Unreported Race | 10 |
| 8th grade student or younger | 30 |
| 9th-12th grade student | 186 |
| High school graduate or equivalent | 45 |
| Post-secondary education student | 3 |
| Family qualified for free or reduced-price school lunch |  |

## Program Services, Activities, and Other Related Assistance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SERVICE PROVIDED** | **NUMBER SERVED** |
| Education or Job Training Activities | 264 |
| Work Experience Activities | 264 |
| Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities |  |
| Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities |  |
| Mentoring Activities |  |
| Support Services |  |

# Program Outcome Measures

* 100% of employment program participants will have a defined work plan that cultivates youth’s involvement and interest.
* Youth ages 14 to 24 will be representative of their communities. More than 80% of youth who apply to Teen Teamworks are from economically disadvantaged families. After completing Earn While You Learn classes, youth can identify 5 or more green careers or jobs, and means to get there
* Supervisors understand program expectations and goals, state and federal child labor laws and regulations. Supervisors will demonstrate an ability to work effectively with youth and foster youth led project-based learning experiences.
* Youth demonstrate new knowledge by making informed, conscious, healthy choices about academic effort, healthy relationships, and other life decisions to pursue continuing education, employment, interests, and talents resulting in improved self-sufficiency.

# Expenditure Data

Expenditures from July 1, 2023, through November 30, 2024 were as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Budget Category** | **Expenditures** |
| Administration (up to 10% allowed) | $8,520.00 |
| Participant Wages and Fringe Benefits | $249,746.00 |
| Direct Staff Services | $60,720.00 |
| Support Services | $23,426.56 |
| Total | $342,412.56 |

# Program Success Stories

The Minneapolis Park Corps (MPC), launched in 2024, allowed MPRB to realize a long-time goal of cultivating employment opportunities for young adults ages 18-24. This program allowed 47 different young people to be employed in seasonal positions in its inaugural year. MPC Members were placed in different internal departments such as Natural Resources, Citywide Recreation, ADA Compliance, and MPRB’s Spark’d Studios along with external partners in proximity to the parks such as The Loppet Foundation, the Bakken Museum, MPS Community Education, and the Brian Coyle Center. Partners noticed increased capacity and increased connection to youth participants when applicable. MPC Members gained experience and exposure to various careers and increased connection to a supportive adult network.

At the Brian Coyle Center, MPC Members supported growing sports and wellness programs for youth in the neighborhood. Upon evaluation one MPC Member, Miske, said that she did not appreciate small children until this experience and now has a goal of becoming a classroom teacher. Another MPC Member, Amal, was hired on in a permanent position at the Center because of her outstanding performance. All 16 outgoing and incoming MPC Members at the Center were interested in and attended a MPRB Sports Officials clinic, a mandatory training for anyone applying for a paid sports official position.

The crew hired to support MPRB’s Natural Resources demonstrated excellence in learning and contributing to the more than 400 acres of managed natural areas in the park system. This crew gained experience with managing invasive species, controlled burns, restoring native plant communities, and improving the overall ecological quality and function of park natural areas. According to Natural Resources’ staff, all members of this crew will be encouraged to apply for a seasonal position with a high likelihood of getting hired on.

