SFY 2022-2023 Governor’s Reserve Youthbuild Program

Progress Report

8/28/2023

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

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[mn.gov/deed](https://mn.gov/deed/%22%20%5Co%20%22DEED%20website)

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## Background

Under Governor’s Reserve funds, $250,000 was made available in the spring of 2021 with the goal of expanding the Youthbuild program model in Minnesota. A year later, an additional $250,000 was made available to continue through 2023.

The Governor’s Reserve Youthbuild Program is a competitive grant program that sought proposals from qualified responders to develop and implement programming following the Minnesota Youthbuild Program model in communities not currently served by state Youthbuild funding. The Youthbuild program addresses gaps experienced by at-risk youth in occupational skills, secondary education, and gainful employment. At the same time, it addresses Minnesota’s affordable housing crisis through the construction and renovation of affordable housing in needy communities. Finally, through its comprehensive pre-apprenticeship construction training model and emphasis on construction employment readiness of youth, Youthbuild expands the construction-ready workforce for commercial construction and residential housing contractors who are currently experiencing labor shortages.

### Grant Requirements

Eligible applicants were nonprofit organizations, community action agencies, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB), local educational agencies, local employers and labor organizations. Special consideration was given to organizations with demonstrated strong partnerships with registered apprenticeship programs in the building trades and affiliated union or local construction employers. Preference was given to applicants that offered COVID-safe training and services with a strong construction training component targeted to underserved BIPOC youth.

The Governor’s Reserve Youthbuild programs provide the following services:

* Construction-focused vocational training and applied mathematics skills which takes place on eligible building projects (see project requirements below);
* Academic learning and support leading to a high school diploma or GED;
* Work readiness/soft skills, life skills, and leadership development with a service-learning focus;
* High-quality mentoring, counseling/case management, and support services;
* Career planning and exploration in the building trades and other high demand/high wage occupations and exposure to union apprenticeships;
* Industry-recognized certification and credentials in construction and high-demand/high wage occupations that meet the needs of local employers and growing skill demands of Minnesota’s economy;
* Placement services in career-specific registered apprenticeship, post-secondary, and/or employment;
* Follow-up services, including counseling and support to maintain placement.

Project Requirements: Construction skills training must result in (1) construction, rehabilitation, or improvement of residential units for homeless persons and very low income families; (2) improvements to the energy efficiency and environmental health of residential units; (3) facilities to support community garden projects; or (4) rehabilitation, improvement, or construction of eligible education, social service, or health facilities that principally serve homeless or very low income individuals and families.

### Overview of the Request for Proposals Process

DEED developed a Request For Proposals (RFP) to award the Governor’s Reserve Youthbuild funds in a statewide open competition. This RFP was posted on DEED’s website on April 16th, 2021 under [Grant and Contract Opportunities](https://mn.gov/deed/about/contracts/). Applications were due by 4:00 p.m. on May 17th, 2021.

The DEED Communications team notified individuals, organizations, and an extensive list of interested parties regarding the release of the Governor’s Reserve Youthbuild RFP. The Youth Development team also shared the RFP with their networks. Pursuant to State law, the State Register included information about RFPs available through DEED.

The RFP directed potential applicants to submit all questions regarding the RFP via e-mail to a specified DEED contact. Questions submitted in writing were answered on a weekly basis and published on DEED’s Grant and Contract Opportunities website.

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## Grantees

Eight proposals were submitted to DEED by the May 17th deadline, representing $877,000 in funding requests. All proposals were read and scored by a team of trained reviewers. Each proposal was evaluated on a 100-point scale, as outlined in the RFP. The following organizations were selected in 2021 to receive $125, 000 each in grant funds for the Governor’s Reserve Youthbuild Program. Based on need and performance, both grantees received an additional $125,000 each in August 2022 to continue Youthbuild programming and serve additional youth.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization** | **Area Served** |  **SFY 2022 Grant Award** | **SFY 2023 Grant Award** |
| Workforce Development, Inc. | Rice County  | $125,000 | $125,000 |
| Goodwill Easter Seals of Minnesota | St. Paul’s Midway-Thomas-Dale neighborhoods | $125,000 | $125,000 |
|  |  **Total:** | **$250,000** | **$250,000** |

### Project Descriptions

**Workforce Development, Inc.- Rice County Youthbuild Program**

Workforce Development, Inc.’s (WDI) Rice County Youthbuild Program primarily serves younger low-income and BIPOC youth who are basic skills deficient and experiencing disabilities. Youth from Faribault, Owatonna, and Northfield are enrolled in local Alternative Learning Centers (ALCs) with the goal of earning their high school diploma. Youthbuild construction skills training is integrated into the ALC curriculum and school schedule. Projects include building equipment sheds at the Faribault and Northfield ALCs and volunteering on two Habitat for Humanity housing projects in Northfield to expand affordable housing.

The Rice County Youthbuild program staff provides case management, mentoring and support to assist youth in successfully completing the program. Youth receive workplace readiness and essential skills training, covering career exploration in the Building Trades, attendance, problem solving, goal setting, communication, conflict resolution, interviewing and job search, and retention. The program offers S/P2, OSHA 10, and OSHA 30 training and certification. Keen interest has been generated in the Rice County Youthbuild program since it began in the fall of 2021. WDI staff stated, “the need and desire for construction instruction and programing far exceeds our capacity with this grant. It has been exciting to see the engagement of youth and local partners.” WDI is investigating various funding streams to continue services and expand programming after the grant’s end date.

Website: [www. workforcedevelopmentinc.org](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cnwaisane%5CDocuments%5Cwww)

Address: 2070 Collegeview Road East, Rochester, MN 55904

*Local Contact: Jinny Rietmann,507-292-5189,* JinnyRietmann@workforcedevelopmentinc.org

**Goodwill Easter Seals of Minnesota (GESM) Youthbuild Program, $125,000**

GESM’s Youthbuild Program primarily serves older low-income BIPOC youth who have dropped out of high school and face multiple barriers to employment. These barriers include basic skills deficiencies, aging out of foster care, being an ex-offender, or a teen parent on public assistance. The GESM Youthbuild program offers these youth hands-on construction skills training and work experience, community service and leadership development (including a new Emerging Leaders Council which raised $500 to provide nutritious, COVID-safe meals to low-income students), Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and support to earn a high school diploma or GED.

Youth who complete training earn construction credentials including MnDOT Flagger, National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER*) Core Construction* and *Your Role in the Green Environment*; all DOL- and industry-recognized recognized credentials. Youth also receive OSHA 10 training and certification and support to earn a drivers permit and license. Services are offered virtually or co-located at the GESM 14,000 square-foot construction training facility in St. Paul and at Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity building sites.

Website: [www.gesmn.org](http://www.gesmn.org)

Address: 553 Fairview Avenue North, Saint Paul, MN 55104

*Local Contact: Becky Brink Ray, 612-750-3845,* bbrink@gesmn.org

## Program Data

The Governor’s Reserve Youthbuild Program demographic, activity, and outcome data that is included in this report reflects the cumulative totals of the two grantees. The data covers the period from the start of the grant contracts, July 1, 2021, through March 31, 2023. The data is preliminary and not final as both second year grants have an end date of June 30, 2023.

|  |
| --- |
| **Governor’s Reserve Youthbuild Program****Demographic, Activity, and Outcome Data – (July 1, 2021 –June 30, 2023)** |
| Total Individual Participants Served | 90 |
|  Program Goal for Individuals Served by end of Grant Period | 84  |
|  Percentage of Goal Met by end of this reporting period | 100% |
| Total Structures Built or Renovated | 14 |
| **Demographic Data** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| **Gender** | Male | 60 | 67% |
| Female | 30 | 33% |
| **Age** |  16-18 | 57 | 63% |
|  19-20 | 17 | 19% |
|  21-24 | 16 | 18% |
| **Race/Ethnicity** | Hispanic/Latino\* (asked as separate question for enrollment) | 29 | 32% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 9 | 10% |
|  Asian | 1 | 1% |
| Black or African American | 22 | 24% |
| Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander | 0  | 0% |
| Multiracial | 8 | 9% |
| White | 50 | 56% |
| **Education Level** | Enrolled in High School diploma or GED program (All are ALC Students) | 90 | 100% |
| Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education | 0 | 0% |
| **Other Demographics****At Enrollment** | High School Dropout  | 46 | 51% |
| Receiving Public Assistance | 55 | 61% |
| Participant with a Disability | 59 | 66% |
| Foster Youth (or aged out of foster care) | 5 | 6% |
| Limited English Proficient | 3 | 2% |
| Offender (previous juvenile justice involvement) | 19 | 21% |
| Pregnant or Parenting | 13 | 14% |
| Basic Skills Deficient  | 84 | 93% |
| Homeless | 5 | 6% |
| Not Employed at Program Enrollment | 50 | 56% |
| Veteran | 0 | 0% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 70 | 78% |
| **Program Services and Activities Data** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Received Employment Preparation, or Work Readiness/Job Training Activities  | 90 | 100% |
| Received Work Experience, Internship, or Apprenticeship Activities | 90 | 100% |
| Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities | 90 | 100% |
| Received Case Management | 90 | 100% |
| Received Support Services | 76 | 83% |
| **Performance Outcome Data (as of September 30, 2022)** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Work Readiness - Attained Work Readiness Skills | 90 | 100% |
| Work Readiness - Attained Education Goals | 62 | 68% |
| Placement - Entered Post-Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military | 13 | 14% |
| Placement - Entered employment | 607 construction | 73% |
| Industry Recognized Credential or Safety Certificate– Earned NCCER or MNDOT Flagger credentials, OSHA 10 or SP/2 safety certificates | 81 | 90% |
| Credential - Earn a Diploma or Post-secondary degree | 32 | 30% |
| **Participant Satisfaction Data** | **Total** | **Percentage (of responses)** |
| Number of participants rating experience as “Excellent” | 33 | 45% |
| Number of participants rating experience as “Very Good” | 26 | 41% |
| Number of participants rating experience as “Average” | 13 | 23% |
| Number of participants rating experience as “Below Average” | 2 | 2% |
| Number of participants rating experience as “Poor” | 0 | 0% |
| Total Number of Surveys Completed | 68 |  |

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## Expenditures

Contracts for the Governor’s Reserve Funds Youthbuild Program were executed to begin July 1, 2021. Expenditures reported through March 31, 2023, are in the following table.

| Entity | Allocations | Expenditures (through 3/31/23) | Percent Expended (through 6/30/23) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Workforce Development, Inc.- Rice County -Grant #9083604 | $125,000 | $125,000 | 100% |
| Workforce Development, Inc.- Rice County -Grant #1083604 | $125,000 | $125,000 | 100% |
| Goodwill Easter Seals- St. Paul – Grant #9433604 | $125,000 | $125,000 | 100% |
| Goodwill Easter Seals- St. Paul – Grant #1433604 | $125,000 | $125,000 | 100% |
| **Grantee Total** | **$500,000** | **$500,000** | **100%** |

##

## Success Stories/Highlights

#### Goodwill Easter Seals of MN Youthbuild Program

**ZANDER**

Before coming to YouthBuild, the last time Zander was in a school building was in 2016 when he dropped out after failing all of his 9th grade classes. That year Zander experienced seizures that kept him in the hospital and out of school. He fell behind and didn’t have the opportunity to catch up on his work. Although he attempted online schooling in 2017/2018 school year, due to family issues, he stopped attending and started working. When asked why he wanted to pursue YouthBuild and get his GED, Zander said, “It would be a big accomplishment. I would be able to do the work I want and to go to college. I would be one of the few people in my family to complete.”

Zander worked steadily through the construction hand and power tools hands-on skill sets. He built on his previous experience by showing interest in learning new techniques, tricks, tool uses, and tool settings. He quickly earned his NCCER *Your Role in the Green Environment* and MNDoT *Flagger* construction credentials. During YouthBuild, Zander reported, “I want to go into welding school. After that, I want to travel the country and work on the pipeline.”

Zander excels at reading and successfully passed the Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science GED tests in just weeks. At the start of YouthBuild, Zander shared that he was most nervous for his GED math test. When he took a practice test, he did not pass. He saved that subject for last, and when it came to preparing for the math test, Zander persisted. He showed up every day for in-person academics and worked through challenging math content that he had not done in years. Zander was engaged in class and open to asking questions about math concepts that were most challenging to him.  After about three weeks of focused preparation, Zander took his GED math test and passed, earning his GED on November 18th, 2021.

Four days later, Zander got a part time job at UPS while finishing out the rest of the program.  After graduation, Zander was happy to report to staff that he obtain a full time job with Plaas Inc. working in a pipe fitting/welding role on the Canadian border.  Zander just finished his year of follow-up services but knows that he can always return to YouthBuild for support in searching for schools, applying for financial aid, obtaining required work supplies, transportation assistance and more.

**NASIR**

Nasir emigrated from Somalia to the United States and has been a permanent resident since August 2019. He earned a diploma in his home country. However, it did not count as a credential in the US. Nasir joined Youthbuild primarily to get his GED and job training in order to pursue his future goals. Inspired by his father, who had worked as a mechanic, Nasir engaged in hands-on construction training and earned his MnDOT Flagger and construction credentials in the DOL-recognized NCCER Core and Green Environment curricula.

When Nasir first joined Youthbuild, he was able to easily commute to classes. However, when his family moved to Blaine, he had limited public transportation options so he attended online Youthbuild classes through Zoom. He consistently met with GESM Youthbuild staff via Zoom weekly in order to prepare for his GED and apply for jobs. Nasir obtained two part-time warehouse jobs, maintaining them while continuing in Youthbuild.

Nasir progressed methodically through his GED tests, quickly passing the math, science, and social studies tests. As an English Language Learner, he was most nervous about passing his Language Arts GED test, especially the new vocabulary and essay portions of the test. To prepare, Nasire spent several days writing and re-writing practice essays. He passed on his second attempt taking the Language Arts GED test, earning his GED last November.

#### Nasir was very interested in attending college or technical school to pursue Computer Science or Cyber Security. Just weeks after earning his GED, he began researching colleges and asking for support with college applications and the financial aid process. Nasir was determined to start schooling in the spring of 2022. After applying for several local colleges and completing his FAFSA, Nasir was accepted at Anoka Technical College for the Spring Quarter of 2022. He is now working to earn his Associates degree in Cyber Security.

**AJ**

At 17 years old, the last grade AJ had completed in school was 8th grade. Challenges and loss in his personal life prevented him from participating fully in high school. When he came to Youthbuild, AJ was excited to participate in a hands-on program. He was interested in the construction trades and wanted to earn his high school diploma so that he could achieve his goal of joining the military. Even though AJ was excited and ready to start something new, he struggled with his basic reading skills. This meant that much of the academic material in Youthbuild was completely new to AJ. While many of his peers were quickly reviewing what they had learned in high school, AJ spent considerable time learning new skills needed to understand and successfully pass his diploma courses.

Despite these challenges, AJ was not discouraged. AJ proved himself to be a well-rounded Youthbuild student. He had outstanding attendance, and always shared his voice in class discussions on a variety of topics from sports to social issues. He balanced daily classes with his part-time job and his role on a football team. He also demonstrated incredible resilience by working tirelessly on his goals. He learned study strategies and took notes during lessons. He often met with the academic instructor on ZOOM for additional support outside of regular class times. With practice, AJ’s reading skills improved and he was able to move more quickly through his high school diploma courses.

When the active programming portion of Youthbuild training was completed, AJ continued individual work on his diploma online during follow-up. He checked in with staff regularly and worked hard on his own. Through his self-motivation and persistence, AJ completed his final lesson, earning his high school diploma on May 25th, 2022! AJ continues to work towards his goal of joining the military by studying for the ASVAB entrance exam with the support of Youthbuild.

Dagme described his journey to YouthBuild as this: “In high school, I started hanging out with this girl and ended up having kids with her. I dropped out to provide and ended up not going to school for over 2 years. I got into drugs and was hooked. I started going to jail, and my brother getting shot made my addiction get worse… Soon I realized that I was going down the wrong path, and I decided to check into treatment.” Dagme moved from Atlanta, Georgia to Minneapolis in the fall of 2022 to participate in a substance abuse treatment program and he said, “It worked. I started working on myself like never before.” From there, Dagme shared that “the next step was getting my high school diploma, which I could use to get into college afterwards.” Dagme joined YouthBuild to earn his diploma and job training, to pursue his future goal of attending college.

**DAGME**

Throughout his time in Youthbuild, Dagme demonstrated incredible work ethic and focus. After a fifty minute communte each weekday, Dagme arrived to the program on time, set up his workstation, took lesson content notes, and asked for help when needed. Under strict curfew, he returned home to his treatment program at 5:00 pm each afternoon, to join group treatment sessions.

Dagme said, “After all the obstacles I faced, I know it is not the end for me. God has a plan for me and he continues to show me how everything is a work in progress, and nothing comes overnight.” Dagme was an active participant during career readiness planning and industry and college tours. He completed his resume and applied to enroll in college. Using the skills he learned, Dagme volunteered with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity one day a week to help build affordable housing and contribute to his community. He showed up each day ready to learn and ready to encourage others to learn as well.

Due to his organization and time management skills, he successfully balanced these responsibilities with his academics, and earned his high school diploma on April 17, 2023, with a GPA of 3.53 on a 4.0 scale. Dagme also earned his MnDOT Flagger credential and his OSHA-10 certification, and volunteered with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity to help build affordable housing and contribute to his community.

Dagme is now eager to start college and begin working toward a degree in child development or education. When reflecting on his future and accomplishments, Dagme said, “I am very positive and motivated for the next chapter of my life. I want better for myself, and my family. I think that earning a bachelor’s degree can set me up for success.” For GESM Youthbuild staff, it has been a joy to see Dagme to pursue his dreams of completing his high school education and preparing for college. Dagme shared that, “My goal is to finish college and still contribute to supporting my daughter… I want to be the first one in my family to graduate college.”

**Employer Partnerships**

Youthbuild hosted an Industry Leadership Network meeting on May 3rd, 2022 which included two industry employer partners: Advantage Seamless Gutters and Twin Cities Framers. The meeting centered on updates from employers, each employers’ interview process, and preparing employer staff for mock interviews with Youthbuild students. Both employer partners are in the hiring phase of their business with expansion playing a big part over the next year.

Mock interviews were held on May 17th between Youthbuild participants and staff from Seamless Gutters, Twin Cities Framers, and the Electrical Association. All employers shared that they thought the students were prepared and they looked forward to following up with them afterwards. Advantage Seamless Gutters has continued to stay in contact with our Youthbuild program and has expressed interest in hiring and training Youthbuild participants to fill positions they have open during the spring and summer months.

#### Workforce Development, Inc. Youthbuild Program

**LOGAN**

Logan joined the Youthbuild program at the start of his senior year at the Northfield ALC. His interest in construction started at an early age: "I grew up building things and have always enjoyed getting my hands dirty," Logan told his Career Planner. For the past few years, Logan has been working as a farm hand and has taken a liking to fixing things around the farm and operating equipment. One day, he would like to become an Agriculture Equipment Operator and own his own farm here in Minnesota. "The best thing about Youthbuild is being able to help out and be a part of building with the community," Logan stated. In addition to the skill sets Logan has honed through the Youthbuild program, Logan has found the program to be a fun addition to his school schedule. "School would be really boring in general and with Youthbuild it's more entertaining," Logan old his Career Planner. Logan plans to take the skills he has learned in Youthbuild to help him be a more creative problem solver in the agriculture industry after he graduates from high school.

**ALIVIA**

Being the only girl in a Youthbuild class of boys doesn't intimidate Alivia. She is no stranger to hard work, putting in many hours before and after school as a picker and a farmhand at local farms. With dreams to go to college at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and studying livestock nutrition, Alivia knew that the more skill sets she can have to make herself a well-rounded person, the better. Alivia joined the Youthbuild program with the goal to develop "skills for life." When asked how her life would be different without joining the Youthbuild program, Alivia explained that he wouldn't have learned so many skills for the future. The best part about Youthbuild according to Alivia is "being able to help people in my community and being able to learn new things." Alivia's Youthbuild Instructor explained that Alivia rolls up her sleeves and works hard each week and was amongst the first in her class to complete her safety training modules, setting an example for the rest of her peers.

**JERRETT**

Jerrett discovered the Youthbuild program during his senior year of high school after transfering to the Northfield ALC. Jerrett's previous coursework and current employment as a Trailer Technician at Taylor Truck Lines, meant he was no stranger to hard work and getting his hand dirty. This set him up for success in the Youthbuild program. Youthbuild Instructor Daryl Kiesow explained that Jerrett has taken on a leadership role, often taking charge to teach less experienced peers how to use hand and power tools and build projects. Jerrett hopes to apply what he has learned in the Youthbuild program toward a future career as a Heavy and Tractor

**Partnerships and Need for Services**

WDI is collaborating with Habitat for Humanity to provide training to youth while constructing two new affordable homes in Northfield, MN. Over the past year, Youthbuilders assisted in the builds by hanging drywall, installing insulation and plastic vapor barriers, and sanding floors for flooring installation prepreation. Youth also completed repairs to two mobile home units in collaboration with Healthy Community Initiatives Mobile Home repair program.

Rice County Youthbuild’s most notable win thus far has been local youths’ interest in the program. According to local staff, the need and desire for construction instruction and programing far exceeds the capacity with this grant. “It has been exciting to see such strong youth engagement but also disheartening to know that we will not be able to offer services to everyone who wants them”. With an additional year of WIOA Governor’s Reserve funding, WDI staff are investigating various other funding streams to expand Youthbuild programing and ensure continuation of services for the many Rice county youth interested in construction.

**Final Quarter Highlights- June 2023**

WDI Youthbuild staff reported: “We had ten (10) high school seniors enrolled in programming and all ten graduated this semester! This is a HUGE win! We had an additional 9 individuals complete their S/P2 certification. Of our ten graduates, nine (9) have plans to attend additional post-secondary training in the fall! Welding, CDL, Agriculture and electrician are the programs our participants are pursuing.”