

Youthprise: East African Youth Economic

Development Grant

## Progress Report

## 12/31/2021

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

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# Introduction

The Minnesota State Legislature appropriated funds during the 2019 Legislative Session to Youthprise, an intermediary youth grant organization. Funds for this East African Youth Economic Development Grant project were appropriated in [Minnesota Laws 2019, Chapter 7, H.F.2, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 2(z)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2019/1/Session%2BLaw/Chapter/7/). The appropriation provides $500,000 for State Fiscal year (SFY) 2020 and $500,000 for SFY 2021. The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is permitted to use five percent of the appropriation to administer the grant, making a total of $475,000 available each year to Youthprise.

These funds, appropriated to Youthprise, are to “give grants through a competitive process to community organizations to provide economic development services designed to enhance long-term economic self- sufficiency in communities with concentrated East African populations. Such communities include but are not limited to Faribault, Rochester, St. Cloud, Moorhead, and Willmar. To the extent possible, Youthprise must make at least 50 percent of these grants to organization serving communities outside the seven-county metropolitan areas, as defined in [Minnesota Statutes, section 473.121, subdivision 2.](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/473.121) This is one-time appropriation and is available until June 30, 2022.”

Youthprise released a [Request for Proposals](https://youthprise.org/funding/grants/rfp-east-african-youth-economic-development-grant/) (RFP) on October 14, 2019. The RFP closed on November 20, 2019. Funding decisions were announced during the final week of December 2019.

# Summary of Objectives

The purpose of the East African Youth Economic Development Grant Program is to reduce disparities and to allow the acquisition of self-sufficiency:

* Career exploration and career planning;
* Work readiness training;
* Job training;
* Job placement;
* Mentoring;
* Internships and apprenticeships;
* Education and industry recognized credentialing; and
* Business development and entrepreneurship exploration

The RFP also described potential support services to address barriers youth face including:

* Transportation,
* Housing,
* Remedial Education
* Language, and
* Social Emotional Learning

# Eligible Applicant Organizations

Eligible applicants for the program included 501(c)(3) youth-focused community-based organizations or 501(c)(3) economic development organizations. Additionally, eligible organizations must have had a history of serving East African youth or communities, be based in Minnesota, and must not have a budget greater than $2 million.

# Grant Performance Measures

Demographics of youth participants including age, gender, low-income status, disability status, language facility, and educational level are collected in addition to performance measures. The performance measures for the East African Youth Economic Development Grant Program are:

## Decreasing barriers to East African youth employment

* Number of youths obtaining internships, apprenticeships, or entering the military
	+ Internships/apprenticeships in high-growth, in-demand occupations and industries
	+ Internships/apprenticeships with East African run businesses
* Number of youths obtaining jobs
	+ Jobs in high-growth, in-demand occupations and industries
	+ Jobs with East African run businesses
* Number of youths receiving support services
	+ Type of support services provided to participants
* Number of East African youth receiving in-demand credentials
	+ Type of credentials obtained by participants
* Number of East African youth participating in education activities
	+ Secondary, post-secondary, Adult Basic Education, GED preparation, and/or ESL classes

## Increasing readiness of East African youth to create businesses

* Number of new East African youth led businesses entering the community including a description of the type, product, and size
* Number of new East African businesses with potential to hire youth
* Number of East African youth participating in various educational and employment related trainings

## Increasing the economic capacity of East African youth

* Number of youths receiving youth wages from grantees including the average wage
* Number of youths receiving family-sustaining wages including the percent above or below

## Number of youths retaining employment 90 days or longer

* Number of youths receiving wages increases during the period of time
* Number of youths being promoted during this period of time.

# Grant Selection Process

Thirty-three (33) proposals were received by Youthprise in response to the RFP with 12 coming from Greater Minnesota. In keeping with its commitment to youth and community voice, Youthprise engaged in a two-stage review process. In the first stage of the grant selection process, community reviewer panels composed of youth, East African community members, and other stakeholders made recommendations for funding. In the second stage of the selection process, Youthprise and DEED staff reviewed the recommendations from the community review panels and made recommendations for grant awards based on financial capacity, programmatic capacity, and geographic balance. The list of selected grantees was sent to the Youthprise Board of Directors for final award decisions.

# Selected Grantees

There were 17 grants awarded, 7 located in Greater Minnesota and 10 in the Metropolitan area. In 2021, 3 sub-grantees had their funding terminated due to lack of reporting and utilization of grant funds. All three organizations were from the Metropolitan area and they are highlighted in the list below.

| **Organization Name** | **Area Served** | **Purpose/Mission** | **Total Amount** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **African Community Services (activities in Greater Minnesota** | Minneapolis | Help refugees from East and West Africa as well as other cultures plus their families secure basic needs and resources for self‐sufficiency and acclimate to a new way of life. | $30,000 |
| **Afro Economic Development Solutions** | St. Paul | Build wealth within African immigrant communities through economic development activities. AEDS works throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area to create wealth, lift immigrant communities out of poverty, and contribute to and benefit from the region’s vibrant economy. | $40,000 |
| **African Immigrants Community Services** | Minneapolis | Provides job readiness and job placement services to East African refugees and their families. Job placement services include helping clients improve their employment situation by finding opportunities for training, and positions which pay more and have better benefits. | $20,000 |
| **Afro American Development Association** | Moorhead | Alleviate poverty by supporting vulnerable New Americans and other diverse communities by building family and community capacity through training, sustainable development, economic empowerment, conflict resolution & peace building. | $120,000 |
| **BRAVE Foundation** | St. Paul | Dedicated in the upliftment and encouragement of young women within the Somali diaspora community. | $30,000 |
| **Community Integration Center** | Willmar | Work with the locals, immigrants and government agencies to reach out in the best possible way to make a full integration of immigrants. | $25,000 |
| **Fortune Relief and Youth Empowerment Organization** | Minneapolis | Provides support services to youth and adults focused on cultural adjustment and increase socioeconomic well- being of the East African communities in Minnesota. | $20,000 |
| **Islamic Civic Society of America** | Minneapolis | Create positive change for Minnesota by building the capacity of East African immigrant families and faith centers to understand and influence key public issues affecting current and future success. | $40,000 |
| **Ka Joog** | Minneapolis | Help Somali youth understand their options and make good choices through mentoring, tutoring, and job readiness training. | $120,000 |
| **New American Development Center** | Minneapolis | Improve the health, educational attainment, economic empowerment, human welfare, and opportunities for youth, adults and families of East African immigrant community within The Twin Cities. | $60,000 |
| **New Vision Foundation** | Minneapolis | Create pathways to success by motivating disadvantaged youth in Minnesota and the developing world through digital literacy; engaging responsible companies in IT philanthropy; and inspiring progress toward global sustainable development. | $120,000 |
| **Northfield Healthy Community Initiative** | Northfield | Cultivate a collaborative community that supports, values, and empowers youth. | $25,000 |
| **Somali Community Resettlement Services** | Faribault | Promote and advance the social well-being and welfare of immigrants and refugees by providing community and resettlement services, with the goal of building a vibrant community, whose members can successfully settle and effectively integrate into the wider American community. | $120,000 |
| **Somalia American Social Service Association** | Rochester | Rebuild the Somali youth of Olmsted County through education, physical activities and programs that promote success. | $35,000 |
| **South Sudanese Foundation** | Moorhead | Builds relationships and share services and resources within the community and other communities in the area. The mission of the South Sudanese Foundation is to be a life-changing community where everyone can encounter reminders of God’s love and move forward together in their home of Moorhead. | $20,000 |
| **Street Soccer Twin Cities** | Minneapolis | Create a better, healthier, and more united community providing year-round free access to organized physical activities, with youth developmental focused programming designed to empower youth voice. | $10,000 |
| **Total awarded for SFY 20-21** |  | **$855,000\*** |

\*This amount reflects the 10% Youthprise is permitted to use to administer the grant.

# Monitoring

Youthprise has staff to monitor the implementation of the grant program including adherence to Youthprise rules and procedures and the collection of data to support the outcome measures outlined above. Youthprise collects the data from each of the selected grantees and report to DEED’s Office of Youth Development on a quarterly basis.

DEED staff will monitor Youthprise and will ensure that it meets state rules and regulations as well as reporting overall grant performance.

# COVID Impact on Programming

During the pandemic, all organizations faced the difficulty of transitioning their programming to a virtual/remote option. Organizations worked to communicate updates about COVID to their community and provide PPE materials for participants who met in person. Organizations with programming that relied on in-person events (i.e. job shadowing, youth sport activities, and conferences) had to pause programming in the early parts of the pandemic, pivot their workplan, and execute online/socially distanced alternative programming. Major challenges that arose from shifting to virtual programming included lack of internet and computers for families, reduced participation from families due to fear of infection, gathering resources to establish safety protocals for staff and participants, and disengaged participants due to lack of in-person events. Other challenges included: some participants and families were hesitant to search for and begin employment out of fear of infection and participants had somewhat limited job placement options after training was completed. Another impact of COVID included some organizations dealing with an increased need from community members applying for unemployment benefits and applying for new employment. This increased need put a strain on the organizational staff capacity. Overall, COVID caused a major disruption of the organizations’ original programming and participant recruitment/engagement and forced them to pivot their activities to virtual and hybrid programming in order to continue serving their communities. Eventually, organizations were able to get back on track with engaging participants and providing employment services.

# Sub-Grantee Success Stories

Some success highlights from sub-grantees include:

* Youth participants across organizations engaged in a variety of vocational and educational activities such as: GED/high school tutoring, resume and interview skills building, financial literacy courses, business entrepreneurship courses, and computer coding in HTML, JavaScript, and CSS.
* Some Certifications participants have received include: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), childcare/CPR and forklift operation.
* Overall, 182 youth have been placed into jobs.
* Due to COVID and social justice movements throughout the past two years, organizations have provided mental health resources and safe spaces for participants to discuss topics about their identity, safety, and managing stress/depression/anxiety.

# Spotlight on a Successful Organization

One particular sub-grantee from greater Minnesota has had success engaging recently immigrated students with educational and practical workforce development. COVID presented a great deal of challenges for this organization since the majority of their population are recently immigrated youth and their families so participants did not have access to computers and internet for virtual programming. The majority of participants are also in ESL classes and virtual school was a barrier for participants to receive the kind of academic support they needed. This organization connected families with technology and internet resources, provided one-on-one academic and language tutoring, and communicating with participants’ families to keep them engaged with their children’s schooling. On top of the academic support, this organization also provided high demand workforce training and certifications such as resume building, interviewing practice, CNA certification, Forklift certification, and childcare/CPR certification so that participants are competitive on the job market. This organization understands the unique challenges of serving a community of new immigrants and has continued to provide resources and wrap around services to meet the needs of the community so that they can build a strong foundation in their transition to America.

# Evaluation

Youthprise plans to evaluate success in meeting the goals and strategies outlined in the work plan in multiple ways:

1. Assess the grantmaking process to determine to what extent the process reached the appropriate organizations in the geographic areas of the state with significant East African populations.
	1. Youthprise was successful in reaching organizations in geographic areas with significant East African populations. Of those served by all subgrantees, over 90% of participants are Black/African American. Of the 16 organizations originally funded in 2020, 10 organizations served the Twin Cities area and 6 organizations served Greater MN (Faribault, Moorhead, Northfield, Wilmar, and Rochester). In 2021, 3 organizations from the Minneapolis area had their funding terminated due to a lack of grant reporting and utilization of grant funds. Thus currently, there are 7 organizations serving the Twin Cities and 6 organizations serving Greater MN.
2. Measure the progress funded organizations made in strengthening their capacity to provide quality programming and services to youth.
	1. Youthprise was also successful in this goal. Organizations primarily used funding to pay for staff to manage the program and provide youth stipends and wrap around services such as transportation and tutoring.
3. Measure success through the outcomes and outputs listed below in the following Grant Outcomes table.

# Grant Outcomes

For the period January 1, 2020 through September 31. 2021, a total of **6,706 participants** were served by the subgrantees in group and individual services. Demographic and outcome data for the SFY 2021 Youthprise Direct Appropriation for individual services is available for the period Jan 1, 2021 to Sept 30, 2021 as follows. Data is not available for those only served in group programming.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS** | **TOTAL** |
| Male | 919 |
| Female | 749 |
| Age 14-17 | 960 |
| Age 18-21 | 654 |
| Age 22-26 | 70 |
| Age 27 and older | 0 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3 |
| American Indian/ Alaskan Native | 0 |
| Asian/ Pacific Islander | 83 |
| Black/African American | 1,565 |
| White | 0 |
| Multi-racial | 10 |
| Somali | 1,359 |
| Ethiopian | 33 |
| Eritrean | 14 |
| Kenyan | 15 |
| Oromo | 90 |
| Sudanese | 45 |
| Ugandan | 0 |
| Rwandan | 0 |
| Djiboutian | 2 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PROGRAM ENROLLMENT AND EXIT** | **TOTAL** |
| Intakes  | 465 |
| Completions | 232 |
| Terminated | 10 |
| Discharges | 192 |
| Other Discharges | 14 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PROGRAM SERVICES RECEIVED AND OUTCOMES** | **TOTAL** |
| Job Training | 270 |
| Work Readiness Training | 255 |
| Career Exploration Career Planning | 334 |
| Internships and Apprenticeships | 88 |
| East African Run Business Internships and Apprenticeships | 73 |
| Job Placement | 182 |
| East African Run Business Job Placement | 57 |
| Sustaining Employment | 167 |
| Industry Credentials | 94 |
| Education Credentials | 97 |
| Entrepreneurship | 86 |
| Mentoring | 730 |
| Transportation | 236 |
| Housing | 33 |
| Education Support | 408 |
| Language Support | 421 |

# Expenditures

The term of the SFY 2020 grant was September 5, 2019 through March 31, 2021. Youthprise fully expended SFY 2020 Direct Appropriation grant funds as follows:

| **Budget Category** | **Total Grant Amount**  | **Amount Expended through March 31, 2021** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Administrative Costs (up to 10% allowed) | $47,500.00 | $47,500.00 |
| Contracted Services | $427,500.00 | $427,500.00 |
| **Total Budget** | **$475,000.00** | **$475,000.00** |

The term of the SFY 2021 grant is January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Youthprise has expended SFY 2021 Direct Appropriation grant funds as follows through November 30, 2021:

| **Budget Category** | **Total Grant Amount**  | **Amount Expended through November 30, 2021** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Administrative Costs (up to 10% allowed) | $47,500.00 | $47,500.00 |
| Contracted Services | $427,500.00 | $334,927.20 |
| **Total Budget** | $475,000.00 | **$382,427.20** |