

**SFY 22 Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio, Inc. (CLUES) Direct Appropriation**

Final Report

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

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## SFY 2022 CLUES Equity Direct Appropriation

### Introduction

The Minnesota State Legislature appropriated funds during the 2021 Legislative Session to Communidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES) to “expand culturally tailored programs that address employment and education skill gaps for working parents and underserved youth by providing new job skills training to stimulate higher wages for low-income people, family support systems designed to reduce intergenerational poverty, and youth programming to promote educational advancement and career pathways.”

#### Legislative Appropriation Reference

The Minnesota Legislation is referenced in [Laws of Minnesota, 2021, Chapter 10, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 3(ff)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2021/1/Session+Law/Chapter/10/)) [Minnesota Session Laws- 2019, 1st Special Session, Ch. 7, H.F. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3(](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2019/1/Session+Law/Chapter/7/)r).

#### Appropriation

This equity appropriation provided a total of $700,000 in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 and $700,000 per year for SFY 2023. At least fifty percent of this amount must be used for programming targeted at greater Minnesota. The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is permitted to use five percent of the appropriation to administer the grant, making the amount available to CLUES $665,000 for SFY 2022 and $665,000 for SFY 2023.

#### Target Groups

CLUES targets low-income adults and youth ages 16 to 24, who are primarily Latinx or BIPOC and live in the Twin Cities metropolitan region or communities surrounding Austin and Willmar where CLUES operate satellite offices. Adult participants typically have some work experience, may have lost a job, and are looking for a better paying job. For many adults, their limited English proficiency poses the greatest barrier to obtaining employment or advancing to higher paid employment. With support from DEED, CLUES now offers an On-Ramp Program with intensive *English for Work* classes to offer these participants extra and more individualized support.

### Summary of Goals and Objectives Presented in the Work Plan

CLUES used its appropriations funding to support the expansion of culturally tailored programs that address employment and education skill gaps for working adults and underserved youth by providing new job skills training to stimulate higher wages for low-income people, family support systems designed to reduce intergenerational poverty, and youth programming to promote educational advancement and career pathways. The overall goal is to advance opportunities for job skills training and skill-building resources for Latinx and immigrant communities.

In the past year, education and job skills training in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and in the greater Minnesota communities of Austin and Willmar focused on four high-demand employment sectors that offered career pathways to family-sustaining, livable wage employment in healthcare, bilingual customer service/administrative support, commercial driver’s license (CDL) transportation, and welding.

From the period July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022, CLUES served 441 youth and adults in group employment activities and 141 in individual case-managed services and activities.

In accordance with the legislative appropriation, 50 percent of the funding is used for programming targeting the Twin Cities Metro Area, and 50 percent is used for targeting the greater Minnesota area. In greater Minnesota, CLUES operates two satellite offices, in Austin and Willmar.

#### Adult and Youth Programming

Of the 141 youth and adults receiving individual, case managed services, 56 were youth between the ages of 14-24 and 85 were adults, ages 25 and older. Over 80% of clients were Hispanic, 60% were low income, and a third were receiving public assistance at enrollment.

Employment and training services and activities provided to these clients included: paid internships and work experiences, post-secondary career exploration and planning, mentoring, and leadership. Vocational training options were provided by CLUES and their training partners Ridgewater College, Riverland College, HeartCert, and a Customer Service and Banking curriculum provided by UnidosUS but taught in-house by CLUES staff and employees from WINGS Financial Services. Throughout programming, CLUES has provided bilingual and culturally relevant wrap-around support services to assist participants in overcoming barriers. Career Navigators assisted participants with job placements and identifying additional community resources to meet their goals.

Performance outcomes show that 96% of individual clients attained work readiness or education goals, 18 earned a high school diploma or credential, 17 entered unsubsidized employment, and 54 individuals enrolled in post-secondary education, credentialed vocational skills training, or an apprenticeship.

#### Programs and Performance

**Career Development Training:**

In SFY 2022, CLUES enrolled 30 students in Bridge to Workforce training, 15 students in Certified Nursing Assistance (CNA) training, six students in Customer Service/Banking training (three in Greater Minnesota), and nine students in Commerical Driver’s License (CDL) training in Willmar. Five CNA students are now completing their vocational training and preparing to take their certification exams, while ten are now starting their Bridge training. Six Customer Service students, three in Greater Minnesota and three in the Twin Cities, began their Bridge Training in August of 2022 and are working on employment search with CLUES Navigators. Career Development staff have been working with Latinx students in Finance on new marketing strategies including video testimonials, additional networking events, and increased advertising in targeted publications such as Minnesota Women’s Press.

**Employer Partnerships**

CLUES’ Job Developer continues to expand partnerships to increase the number of employment opportunities CLUES can offer participants. New partners include Bremer Bank, Associated Bank, Wings Financial, St. Thomas Dougherty School of Education, McNeilus Trucking & Manufacturing, and Second Harvest Heartland.

**English as a Second Language (ESL) Services:**

During the past year, classes were hosted virtually and served clients from around the state, delivering *English as a Second Language* (ESL) curriculum at three varying levels of difficulty. During the summer of 2022, ESL students completed 4,883 hours of class time.

**Clubhouse-to-Careers (C2C) Training and Internships:**

CLUES launched an exciting new year-long *Clubhouse-to-Careers* program that offers employment readiness training, technology-specific classes, and paid professional work experience to youth, ages 16 to 22, who are interested in exploring technology careers. Nineteen young people recently completed the program and the majority were placed in paid summer STEM internships at companies such as 3M, Accenture, Best Buy, or Xcel Energy Center.

Through CLUES’ C2C partnership with FRESH Films, seven students had a five-day film internship in Boston, with two days of additional educational tours, including a visit to MIT. These internships offer invaluable workforce experience, which nearly doubles the chance of a job offer to youth. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers 2021 Student Survey, this is an advantage that only 7% of Latinx students can access, compared to 73% of white students. CLUES SFY 2023 C2C programming will focus exclusively on coding.

**Best Buy Teen Tech Center (BBTTC):**

The Best Buy Teen Tech Center (BBTTC) continues to support the creativity and technical skills of Latinx youth through drop-in hours, workshops, and special events. Youth participated in the *2022 Facebook Engineer for the Week,* a national competition. One CLUES team won the challenge with a video game they created related to climate justice.

Interest in the BBTTC has been growing to the point where hours of operation are expanding to be more available to the community on weekends, in addition to afterschool hours. One youth group was initially reluctant to participate but attended special sessions while their parents attended Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) programing. They were quickly converted and excited about the skills they were learning.

*Tacos and Tech Saturdays* have become one of the most enduring and successful platforms for community building at CLUES. These are monthly family events in which a variety of tech projects, at varying skill levels, are completed in about 15 minutes and have an inter-generational appeal. CLUES also offers popular panel presentations and *Girls Tech Talks* which are offered in a comfortable, welcoming setting. These presentations give students a chance to hear from Latinx professionals about how they pursued their interests in tech, navigated barriers, and found or created communities of their own in tech.

**2022 CLUES Youth Conference:**

The 2022 CLUES Youth Conference was held on November 19th in 2022 at Metro State University. About 150 youth and young adults and 100 parents or guardians attended. The aim of the conference is to connect students, parents, and communities to resources, explore future academic and career pathways, and uplift the experience and identities of students.

#### Culturally Responsive Support Services

Bilingual navigation services guide participants to develop short- and long-term career plans that are realistic and aligned with their individual skills and interests. CLUES staff work with participants to identify and resolve employment, transportation, childcare, and housing barriers, family violence, and other unique issues affecting participants’ ability to enroll in trainings and obtain and retain employment.

Support services include direct financial supports to help low-income participants access transportation, professional clothing, work tools, and other needs. Participants are encouraged to engage in CLUES’ other economic empowerment services such as financial coaching, homeownership trainings, lending circles, and free tax services. CLUES offers a bi-weekly Canasta Familiar food distribution program for households experiencing food insecurity.

**COVID Impact on Programming**

CLUES participants with children continued to experience challenges completing job training and obtaining employment due to limited chilcare options. This was a particular challenge for CNA students who are expected to work varied shifts. Another significant challenge for CNA students has been the delay between their training and opportunities to take their licensing exam, which usually is about a month after the completion of the course. Representatives from training organizations have been meeting with staff from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to resolve a number of barriers related to the testing, including giving students more time to complete the written exam; reviewing the language to make sure it is accessible to students who may be English language learners; and providing more venues where the exam can be taken.

#### Data Elements and Performance Indicators Being Collected and Reported

CLUES submits data to DEED every quarter to document the demographics of participants served, services and activities provided, and outcomes achieved. The elements collected are listed below.

### Grant Outcomes

Demographic and outcome data for the SFY 2022 CLUES Equity Direct Appropriation for individual services is available for the period July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 (as follows):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SFY2022 PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS** | **TOTAL** |
| Total Participants served in group services (no detailed demographics available | 441 |
| Total individual participants served | 141 |
|  |  |
| Male | 26 |
| Female | 113 |
| Did Not Disclose | 2 |
|  |  |
| Age 14-15 | 2 |
| Age 16-17 | 6 |
| Age 18-19 | 14 |
| Age 20-24 | 34 |
| Age 25-30 | 21 |
| Age 31 and over | 62 |
|  |  |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 118 |
| American Indian/ Alaskan Native | 3 |
| Asian/ Pacific Islander | 3 |
| Black/African American | 16 |
| White/Not Hispanic | 46 |
|  |  |
| 8th grade and under | 0 |
| 9th grade – 12th grade | 20 |
| High School Graduate / equivalent | 79 |
| Some post-secondary education | 42 |
|  |  |
| Limited English proficient | 1 |
| Youth from Families Receiving Public Assistance | 44 |
| Youth Offender | 4 |
| Youth with a Disability | 5 |
| High School Dropout at Enrollment | 20 |
| Basic Skills Deficient | 1 |
| Homeless or Runaway Youth | 5 |
| Not employed at program enrollment | 52 |
| Veteran | 2 |
| Low-income | 84 |
|  |  |
| **PROGRAM SERVICES RECEIVED** | **TOTAL** |
| Job Training or Education Services | 140 |
| Paid Internships and Work Experience | 57 |
| Mentoring, Leadership and Community Service | 136 |
| Support Services | 115 |
| Post-Secondary and Career Exploration, Guidance, and Planning | 124 |
|  |  |
| **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** | **TOTAL** |
| Attained Work Readiness/Education Goals | 136 |
| Obtained High School Diploma or Equivalent, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, Returned to School | 18 |
| Entered Unsubsidized Employment | 17 |
| Entered Post-Secondary Education, Apprenticeship, or Credentialed Vocational Occupational Skills Training | 54 |
| Placment in Employment, Military, Job Search, Post-Secondary Education, Vocational Occupational Skills Training | 95 |
| Completed Program Objectives | 95 |
|  |  |
| **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION** | **TOTAL** |
| Number of Participants Rating Experience as “Excellent” | 9 |
| Number of Participants Rating Experience as “Very Good” | 9 |
| Number of Participants Rating Experience as “Average” | 9 |
| Number of Participants Rating Experience as “Below Average” | 0 |
| Number of Participants Rating Experience as “Poor” | 0 |
| Surveys Completed | 27 |

### Expenditures

### Expended Grant Funds

CLUES has expended 86.1% of **SFY 2022** Direct Appropriation grant funds from July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022):

| **SFY 2022 Budget Category** | **Amount** |
| --- | --- |
| Administrative costs (up to 10% allowed) | $52,045 |
| Contracted services | $5,300 |
| Participant wages and fringe benefits | $4,089 |
| Direct services | $509,150 |
| Support services | $1,911 |
| **Total budget expended through September 30, 2022** | **$572,495** |

CLUES expended 100% of **SFY 2021** grant funds as follows:

| **SFY 2023 Budget Category** | **Amount** |
| --- | --- |
| Administrative costs (up to 10% allowed) | $7,912 |
| Contracted services | $0.00 |
| Participant wages and fringe benefits | $0.00 |
| Direct services | $79,124 |
| Support services | $0.00 |
| **Total budget expended through September 30, 2022** | **$87,036** |

### New Grant Funds

As of the end of September 2022, CLUES has expended $87,036 of it’s $665,000 SFY 2023 Direct Appropriation grant funds, which began July 1, 2022.

### Success Stories

**Jorge**

Jorge was one of the first participants in CLUES’ new *C2C Program*. His C2C instructor, Greg Romero, said of him, “This young man stepped up, showed up, and took home all he aimed for. When he joined the *C2C Pathways* *Program,* he was living in Albert Lea and was attending the program virtually. Jorge soon found a way to relocate to Lakeville so he could be closer to CLUES and obtain employment to further his goals. He took a position baking cookies and working in food production in preparation for his summer C2C internship at Accenture. His supervisor at Accenture noticed Jorge’s perseverance, interest, and passion to enter into the STEM field of work. Accenture granted him a paid STEM apprenticeship. Now Jorge's on his way to becoming the full-stack web developer he wants to be.”

**Jennifer**

When Jennifer first came to CLUES, she was unemployed and homeless, living out of her car with her three kids, including her newborn. To add to this, her newborn son was born with complications, needing surgery and constant medical supervision. The silver lining of her son’s constant hospital appointments was a newfound inspiration to work in the medical field, particularly with children.

When Jennifer signed up for the CLUES’ Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program, her goals were to earn her CNA and find employment where she could grow and make a difference. Her CLUES Navigator, Luis-Michel Esquivel, saw how Jennifer grew as a person while taking part in the classes. He helped provide her with transportation support and medical scrubs when she began working.

CLUES’ CNA program has had a significant impact in Jennifer’s life. She not only accomplished her original goals, but she also bought a home with her partner and landed her dream job as a CNA at Children’s Hospital in St. Paul. It is in the same wing where her newborn son had received treatment. “Jennifer is a reminder of why we do the work that we do, and her outlook on the future is bright. She continues to seek out opportunities for growth and learning to get better in the healthcare field. She credits CLUES with giving her the knowledge and confidence to continue learning and face the challenges that lay ahead,” says her Navigator.