

Southwest Michigan Prosperity Committee
C/O John Egelhaff and Lee Adams

Proposal: YOU Youth Career Pathway Initiative

Dear Committee Members:

It is with excitement that I submit the following career pathway proposal for your consideration as a candidate for August 2019 Microgrant funding.

One of the most critical components to an individual's self-confidence and self-sustainability is a meaningful career. Acquiring the skills necessary in the 21st century economy can be elusive to many. As of July 25, 2019, the State of Michigan's Pure Michigan Talent Connect portal indicated a total of 173,697 open positions statewide. Opportunities exist for those prepared. However, as revealed by a recent study, this opportunity does not exist equitably for all. Only 10% of low-income teens (16-19) of color are likely to have a job- any job at all. That is a devastating statistic for the hopes of many of our community's youth and for an economy so in need of talent. For some youth there is simply a lack of knowledge about the career opportunities that exist in the local economy. For others there is limited or no access to training programs that teach the skills needed to succeed in these high-demand positions. Many do not have an adequate support system to allow for career exploration and development. Regardless of the many barriers facing some youth, everyone needs assistance in navigating from the initial stages of career goal setting through the point of obtaining a career position. While parents and school personnel play this vital mentorship role for many, individuals facing academic struggles, underlying educational limitations or living with socio-economic or family related strife require additional assistance. This is the role that YOU fills throughout a four-county region through a menu of career pathway services.

Serving youth ages 14-24, Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) provides career pathway planning to over 1,000 individuals annually in Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties. The majority of these services focus on individuals living in poverty and/or facing a barrier to their education and/or employment. This includes targeting individuals of color and those with disabilities (data available upon request). Utilizing a research-based career coaching model developed by Mathematica entitled "Goal 4 It!", YOU's team employs a goal-centered approach customized to each youth's passions and skills that illuminates career options and a well-defined pathway leading them to success. Along this pathway, YOU provides youth the following services:

- Individual Service Strategy and Career Pathway Planning sessions with an assigned career coach;
- GED, High School Diploma services and tutoring;
- Career assessments and interest inventories;
- Employability skills training;
- Career exploration activities, including Talent Tours and job shadowing;



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- Paid internships and apprenticeships at local employers throughout the four-county region;
- Paid career training in high-demand industries such as welding, early childhood education, certified nursing assistant, auto technician, and culinary arts; and
- Supportive services including assistance with transportation, work clothing purchases, and vital record documents.

The RPI funding would be utilized to support and enhance the current work being conducted across the region by YOU, most specifically the development of new internship, apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities for marginalized youth. Increasing the existing network of employer partners includes significant employer training, the utilization of data systems, and a considerable amount of staff time. YOU team members will meet one-on-one with representatives from prospective employers in the five core high-demand industries of Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology, Professional Trades, and Business (as identified by the recent Marshall Plan for Talent). Training with each employer will include an overview of the purpose of the training program, the development of a training plan, relevant child labor laws and safety standards, timesheet and evaluation protocol, and a general overview of the YOU data information system, YOUedge. After this process is complete, YOU team members tasked with developing new sites will connect with YOU Career Coaches to match youth in an experience relevant to individual participants career goals.

This work directly aligns with the RPI's education goal of promoting talent development and retention to encourage growth and sustainability in all facets of the local economy by promoting and implementing employer-based training programs (such as internships, apprenticeships, job shadows, etc.) across high-demand industries in Southwest Michigan.

YOU is excited to partner with the Southwest Michigan Prosperity Committee to expand important opportunities to those that need them the most. Should you have any questions regarding this proposal, or the supplemental information attached, please do not hesitate to call upon me at your convenience.

With appreciation,



Eric Stewart
Director- YOU



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Supplemental Information

Organizational Description

YOU, a division of the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA), is a long-time provider of educational and employment-related services in the Southwest Michigan region. For decades, KRESA/YOU has overseen the successful management of federal workforce development contracts, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and local initiatives, such as the MyCITY Summer Youth Employment Program. This work positions the organization well to provide the services outlined above in a manner that delivers results.

The key to KRESA/YOU's 58 years of successful operation has been the development and cultivation of strong, collaborative relationships with area schools, community agencies, and local business and industry. Operating as a Michigan Works! Southwest partner, KRESA/YOU oversees operation of American Job Centers in Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties, providing career development services to individuals age 14-retirement. Utilizing a well-established regional partner network and an innovative, goal-focused service approach will allow KRESA/YOU to continue its rich history of service to the communities of Southwest Michigan.

The YOU team is made up of 42 skilled career development professionals with six career coaches, two career navigators and a small team of administrative and support staff contributing to the work of the Youth Career Pathway initiative.

Partners

YOU is a core partner of Michigan Works! Southwest, operating the organization's One-Stop Services, Employment Services, and Youth Services across the four-county region. The other core partners within this organization are the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research (Michigan Works! Administration, PATH Services) and Michigan Human Resources Development Incorporated (Adult and Dislocated Worker Services). These partners work alongside YOU on various workforce development initiatives, including services to hundreds of regional employers. This network will amplify YOU's access, reach and effectiveness in increasing internship, apprenticeship, and other work-based training opportunities in the area.

Additional key partner of YOU are local school districts and community service agencies. YOU relies heavily on these entities as a referral source.

For the purpose of this proposal, YOU's most critical partners are employers willing to host youth in internships, apprenticeships and other work-based training programs as they develop within their career pathway. Currently, YOU enjoys work-based training relationships with over 50 regional employers. This number can and will be enhanced through this proposal.

Project Timeline

The services identified in Section 1 above will be available to participants across the span of a year in an open entry/open exit format. Some services, such as the Career Training options, will be offered on timelines specified by training providers. As those dates are identified, the availability of the training will be marketed to current participants and potential program applicants.

Budget

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED	
YOU Youth Career Pathway Initiative	
Staff Expenses	
Wages	\$ 5,439.00
Fringes	\$ 3,485.00
Total Staff Expenses	\$ 8,924.00
Other Expenses	
Supplies, Materials, Other	\$ 555.00
Special Services	\$ 521.00
Total Other Expenses	\$ 1,076.00
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS	\$ 10,000.00

- Supplies, Materials, Other: Includes office supplies, copies, flyers, and data system costs
- Special Services: KRESA's "central office" charges, including HR, payroll, accounting, etc.

KRESA/YOU will leverage additional numerous other funding sources to complete the work identified above.