



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In Brief

April 2022

A DEDO Project Summary

Denver Youth Employment Program includes Summer jobs, training, options

Denver City Council is considering approval of an intergovernmental agreement between [Denver Economic Development & Opportunity \(DEDO\)](#) and the Denver Public Schools with a contract for **\$600,000** for the Summer 2022 delivery of the city's popular summer youth employment programming. This contract will serve 194 local youth this summer with a full complement of pre-employment training, various summer employment experience options, and ongoing support.

What is this summer contract?

As a contracted partner of Denver Workforce Services' Denver Youth Employment Program (DYEP), DPS will recruit the disadvantaged youth and complete the income qualification process, provide a week of pre-employment orientation and training, including a financial literacy curriculum, and then match each youth with a local employer. The income-qualified youth will have several options for participation and earning, including \$15.87/hour as wage or stipend for 120 hours for either a fully live (onsite) traditional summer job, or a fully virtual pre-employment and employment experience, or a hybrid of both live and virtual.

While Denver's locally funded summer youth jobs program has been in place since the early 1990s, the program has evolved significantly. Our 2022 work is complemented by a \$60,000 grant to DPS from Bank of America which specifically serves 30 young African-American men from the local affiliate of My Brother's Keeper to participate in summer employment; and, the city is in its second year of a grant from the Cities of Financial Empowerment for \$95,000 to fortify the financial literacy curriculum and banking services to the summer youth—providing a strong introduction to earning, saving, and budgeting. It's also worth noting that the hourly wage paid to our participants has increased about 40% over a ten-year period, including meeting the city's Minimum Wage Ordinance.

With DPS as our lead program provider, the program's seasonal duration includes both kick-off and graduation events as well as licensing and access to ten modules of "Bring Your A Game," a youth job readiness software platform developed by the Center for Work Ethic Development. New this year, Denver Workforce has also purchased the "Empower" app for our participants to track their work time, their earnings, and even have a working budget.

To be considered for this popular summer employment experience, youth need to be residents of Denver and able to work, be between 14-21 years old, and in school. Applications are being accepted at <https://bit.ly/DYEP2022Youth>.

What else does our Denver Youth Employment Program (DYEP) include?

This contract is one component of the [city's comprehensive employment services for Denver's youth](#). DPS is just one of six contracted partners, as other current youth-focused contracts include the following:

Ability Connection Colorado - \$550,000

Ability Connection Colorado is currently contracted to provide its Employment Works program, which helps Denver

youth who are experiencing a range of barriers to employment progress toward self-sufficiency and independence and pursue a healthy, high quality life. Services are designed to help ensure success for young people with a disability, as well as those who are at-risk due to other factors, such as:

- Being an English language learner
- Being a youth offender
- Being homeless, runaway, in foster care, aged out of foster care, or in an out-of-home placement
- Being one or more grade levels behind in math or literacy skills
- Being pregnant or parenting
- Having a cognitive or physical disability

Center for Employment Opportunities - \$177,591

As our partner, the Center for Employment Opportunities can help youth who have been involved in the justice system. They provide job-readiness training, transitional employment, job coaching and placement, and follow-up supports.

Mile High Youth Corps - \$150,000

Mile High Youth Corps serves diverse young adults with varying degrees of education, socioeconomic status, and work experience. MHYC understand that barriers must be addressed to close the growing skill and equity gaps in the workforce. Their highly respected programs provide skill building for future self-advocacy along with empowerment, encouragement, and mentoring. Programs range between 6-10 months, dependent on each individual's career and educational goals.

Prodigy Ventures - \$153,250

Prodigy Coffeehouse is a social enterprise run by the talent of young adults from Northeast Denver who have previously been disconnected from school and/or work. Prodigy envisions an economically equitable Denver with a new generation of thriving, healthy, innovative community members who have experienced upward social mobility and live in diverse neighborhoods. Through high-caliber professional development and hands-on learning in a Prodigy enterprise, disconnected young adults develop mindsets and skills for sustainable careers, economic mobility and, most importantly, to go forth and enrich their city. Prodigy's mission is to build skills, mindsets, networks, and economic capital for sustainable careers.

Urban Peak - \$159,688

Urban Peak's role as our partner brings services are uniquely tailored to address the challenges faced by youth who are experiencing homelessness. Urban Peak helps youth identify their individual strengths and future goals to support achieving independence and self-sufficiency. They can grant youth the opportunity to build trusting relationships with safe adults, often for the first time in their lives, while delivering education and employment services.

In all, the Denver Youth Employment Program mission is to offer a caring environment where youth and young adults can get exposure to tomorrow's sustainable careers and stackable credentials. We can help them get a job -- but with personalized mentoring, training, and career-exposure supports, we can also help with so much more than just "a paycheck." Our asset-based approach means that the city and its contracted partners help youth explore their interests, talents, and strengths, not focusing on the barriers or where someone might fall short according to someone else's definition of success. Through listening and coaching, and along with a range of supportive services, Denver Workforce Services and its partners actively help our local residents experience that economic mobility can be so much more: a career, a future, a world of opportunity.

What are the next steps?

Denver City Council will be considering this \$600,000 contract with Denver Public School for Summer 2022 programming in April.