



30,000 Feet Direct Appropriation

Legislative Report

11/19/2024

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Program Overview

30,000 Feet is focused on addressing educational disparities faced by African American students in St. Paul, ensuring that all students are able to achieve their full potential. Its objectives are to increase academic achievement among students, reveal and nurture students' artistic skills, and use art as a way to improve literacy outcomes. 30,000 Feet works towards this goal by providing culturally responsive academic tutoring and social and emotional development to elementary (K through 3rd grade) students during the school year, and enrichment activities during the summer. 30,000 Feet also provides a coding program targeted at high school students, including those who have had involvement with the justice system. The legislative direct appropriation primarily focuses on providing individualized services to youth ages 14 through 24 and supports 30,000 Feet's partnership with Ramsey County to provide job opportunities to youth who have contact with Juvenile Delinquency system.

Legislative Appropriation

Funds for this project are appropriated in [Minnesota Session Laws - 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 53 S.F. 3035, Article 2, Subdivision 3\(t\)](#). The amount available to 30,000 Feet for SFY 2024 is **\$380,000**. (DEED is permitted to retain up to 5% of the \$400,000 appropriation for administration and monitoring of the grant.)

Allowable Use of Funds

In accordance with the language appropriating these funds, allowable activities include:

- Providing paid work experience opportunities to youth;
- Offering after-school programming; and
- Providing programming that prevents summer learning loss for African American youth.

In addition, 30,000 Feet has prioritized services to youth who have barriers to employment, live below the federal poverty line, and/or have had contact with the juvenile delinquency system.

Program Activities and Performance Metrics

Youth ages 14-24 were recruited for 30,000 Feet's tech apprenticeship program. The youth who participated in this program work 20 hours a week in a paid position. To accommodate shifts caused by the COVID-19 health emergency, work opportunities were provided in hybrid formats. In order to provide hybrid options, 30,000 Feet partners with Comcast to provide internet access codes to participants. Youth were also provided Chromebooks in order to complete program activities, school activities, and work experiences. These wraparound services in addition to transportation support allowed youth to complete programming and retain youth in the program to help ensure successful outcomes. Program participants who are 18 years or older are supported with paid work

experiences if needed, or they start their full-time careers in IT fields at companies such as Software for Good or Treat and Company. Youth have the ability to complete code academy certificates which are industry recognized credentials that allow the youth to enter into the tech field without needing a college degree.

Culturally-relevant pedagogy and practices are core aspects of 30,000 Feet’s programming. Specifically, engaging and meeting students where they are at academically, socially, and economically served as a critical strategy to retaining youth in programming. 30,000 Feet staff used participants’ school IEPs, transcripts, and parent knowledge to better understand the needs of each youth. As a result of this, the program model adjusted to in order to create specialized learning environments, implementing academic learning breaks, decreasing group sizes, increasing the intensity and interval of on-on-one academic supports, and providing peer-to-peer support to meet students’ social needs. This was also bolstered by creating a positive, supportive environment that lifts all students up and supports them in achieving their goals. To address mental health related needs of youth participants, 30,000 Feet provides modified environments to better support youth including quiet areas and

30,000 Feet also provides group services.¹ These services were provided to elementary aged youth and were focused on language arts and literacy. The curriculum used by 30,000 Feet aligns with Minnesota’s K-5 Language Arts standards and is based on phonics-driven literacy instruction. Students work on skills such as sequencing, retelling, identifying story elements in a text, using literature to support their understanding of African culture and life in Africa, poetry, narrative writing, and history. This part of programming aligns with the legislative intent of providing programming that prevents summer learning loss to African American youth.

Expenditure Data

The SFY 24 grant contract started on July 1, 2023 and ended on June 30, 2024. SFY 24 grant funds were fully expended by the end of June 2024. The cost category breakdown of expenditures is reported below.

Budget Category	Expenditures
Administration (up to 10% allowed)	\$38,000.00
Participant Wages and Fringe Benefits	\$100,000.00
Direct Staff Services	\$242,500.00
Total	\$950,000

¹ Note, DEED does not collect individual demographic data on youth served in group services.

Program Data and Outcomes

65% of students have been released from probation with skills to enter the tech field. 30,000 Feet has also helped to decrease recidivism among many youth and their peers by 40% from providing them with a safe welcoming and productive place to be on and off probation.

The data included in this report reflects youth served during State Fiscal Year 2024.

DATA ON PARTICIPANTS SERVED – INDIVIDUAL SERVICES - (Cumulative for the SFY)			
Total Individual Participants Served		200	
Gender	A. Female	90	45.0%
	B. Male	110	55.0%
	C. Other	0	0.0%
	D. Prefer not to answer	12	6.0%
Age	A. 14 and under	69	34.5%
	B. 14 – 15	66	33.0%
	B. 16 – 17	51	25.5%
	D. 18 – 21	7	3.5%
	E. 22 – 24	2	1.0%
Ethnicity / Race	A. Hispanic/Latino	6	3.0%
	B. American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.5%
	C. Asian/Pacific Islander	61	30.5%

	D. Black or African American	89	44.5%
	E. White	4	2.0%
	F. Multiracial	26	13.0%
	G. Not Disclosed	13	6.5%
Education Level	8th Grade, or under	36	18.0%
	9th Grade -12th Grade	161	80.5%
	High School graduate or equivalent	3	1.5%
	Post-Secondary Education	1	0.5%
Other Demographics	A. Limited English Proficient	17	8.5%
	B. Participant/Family Receiving Public Assistance	144	72.0%
	C. Foster Youth	7	3.5%
	D. Participants with a Disability	12	6.0%
	E. High School Drop-Out	2	1.0%
	F. Youth or Adult Offender	4	2.0%
	G. Pregnant or Parenting Youth	5	2.5%
	H. Basic Skills Deficient	153	76.5%
	I. Homeless Individual or Runaway Youth	5	2.5%

	J. Not Employed at Program Enrollment	152	76.0%
	K. Veteran	0	0.0%
	L. Economically Disadvantaged	179	89.5%
PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES - (Cumulative for the SFY)			
	A. Received Education, Employment Preparation, or Work Readiness/Job Training Activities (Includes Training in ABE/Remedial, Basic Skills, Classroom, Labor Market Info, Life Skills, and Occupational Skills)	109	54.5%
	B. Received Work Experience, Internship, or Apprenticeship Activities	160	80.0%
	C. Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities	126	63.0%
	D. Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities	94	47.0%
	E. Received Mentoring Activities	183	91.5%
	F. Received Support Services	96	48.0%
	G. Received Financial Literacy Education	160	80.0%
INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES - (Cumulative for the SFY)			
	A. Attained Work Readiness Goals ²	58.5%	58.5%
	B. Attained Education Goals	92.5%	92.5%

² Note that this excludes Kindergarten through 3rd grade youth served by 30K Feet.

C. Received Academic Credit or Service-Learning Credit	4.0%	4.0%
D. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Dropout - Returned to School	49.5%	49.5%
E. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military	7.5%	7.5%
F. Entered employment	12.5%	12.5%
G. Retained employment, increased wages or advanced career	19.5%	19.5%
H. Completed Program Objective	89.0%	89.0%
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FOR PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES - (Cumulative for the SFY)		
A. Number of participants rating experience as "Excellent"	89	52.7%
B. Number of participants rating experience as "Very Good"	73	43.2%
C. Number of participants rating experience as "Average"	2	1.2%
D. Number of participants rating experience as "Below Average"	5	3.0%
E. Number of participants rating experience as "Poor"	0	0.0%
F. Total Number of Surveys Completed	169	84.5%

Success Stories

We try to over recruit the number of students enrolled in the coding course because of significant drops once the work load goals and work readiness paperwork requirements need to be met. This semester staff and students were better equipped to take on the work load and paperwork so we underestimated the amount of tech needed for this cohort. We thought it may be an issue for the students to share a laptop and it could affect their progress due to the doubled number of students of previous cohorts and not enough technology readily available. The students actually have been working very well with each other and are making a lot of progress.

Several students shared that they love coming to 30k not only to see our staff but they enjoy their time learning literacy and different art genres and getting paid to learn a new challenging skill.

The 2nd and 3rd grade students from the start of the program of October 2023 to present (April 15, 2024) have shown growth in participation, positive reinforcement of confidence, and growth mindset goals achieved. With these use of these effective strategies, the students who have had a regular attendance at the 30kft program, 80% or higher, has positive growth and skills within their literacy goals within 75% effectiveness.