

Right Track

Building Saint Paul's Future Workforce

Saint Paul City Council Budget Committee
June 17, 2026



SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA



**RIGHT
TRACK**

SAINT PAUL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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Right Track Overview

Building Saint Paul's Future Workforce

Right Track provides paid work experiences, career exploration, and workforce development opportunities for Saint Paul youth.

Mission: Right Track's mission is to build Saint Paul's workforce by providing career-readiness opportunities and work experience for the young people of Saint Paul.

Program Goals

- Develop workforce readiness skills
- Explore careers and career pathways
- Build professional networks and relationships with caring adults
- Earn income and strengthen financial capability



Meet the Team

Right Track Summer 2026



Nardos



Xue*



Leticia*



Carlo



Moua*



Rae*



Hope



Rocky*

***Program Alum**



Right Track Programs

YJ1: Youth Jobs One is for young people ages 14-19 to build their foundational job skills through their first or second work opportunity. YJ1 primarily provides city-subsidized summer jobs at parks, libraries and nonprofits.

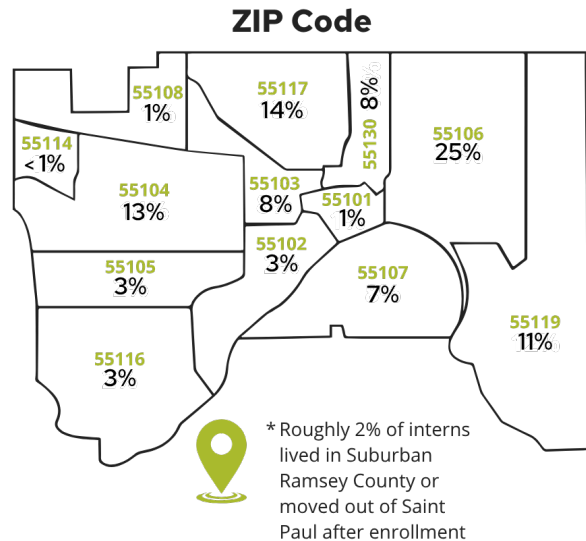
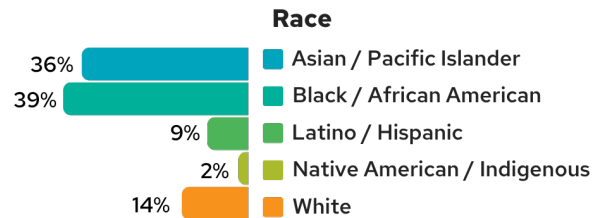
YJ2: Youth Jobs Two builds on those foundational skills by providing paid internships to young people ages 16-21 at organizations and businesses across industries.

Public Pathways: College internship program for young adults designed to strengthen partnerships with City departments to develop pathways for young people in Saint Paul to enter certified positions within the City.

YJPRO: YJPro is our certificate bearing initiative. These experiences connect RT alum, young adults (18+) to an industry recognized credential through strategic partnerships. Examples of this have been EMS Academy & UX Academy.



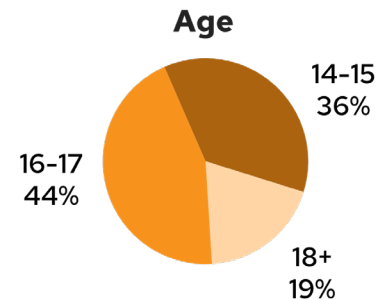
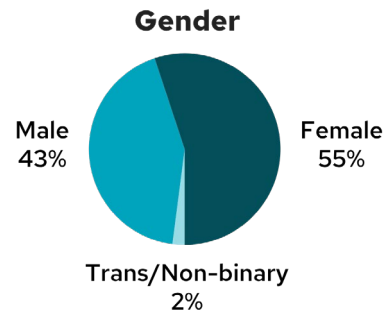
2025 Program Results



1024
participants

\$2,313,618
earned in wages & stipends

144
employers





Program Highlights

High-quality internships are building skills, confidence, and workplace readiness across Saint Paul youth.

- 95% of participants developed at least one adult professional reference
- 99% reported their supervisor treated them with respect
- 98% felt they learned something interesting or useful
- 97% said they feel proud of their work
- 89% of supervisors reported they would Hire their intern if a position were available, or Recommend them to a colleague





Program Budget & Funding Sources

Total Budget: \$2,922,473

City of Saint Paul – 12.16%

- General Fund Support
- Transfer from Parks General Fund

Foundation / Other – 7.39%

- Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
- NBA Foundation
- Saint Paul Public Schools Partnership

Other Government – 80.45%

- ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act)
- State of Minnesota DEED
- CDBG (Community Development Block Grant)
- HRA (Housing & Redevelopment Authority)
- Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

As I reflect on my journey, I felt it was important to acknowledge the people and experiences that helped shape where I am today. Thank you to the Right Track program for giving me these experiences that I couldn't get elsewhere. While they didn't relate directly to dentistry, they gave me meaningful insight into the career that I did want to pursue. As a first-generation student, these experiences gave me exposure to what different avenues of healthcare could look like and also gave me clarity on the profession that I was truly interested in.

- Lilah Xiong Right Track Alum &
Current Dental School Student



Expense Allocation & Impact

Expenses Breakdown

- Youth Wages: 59.09%
- Full-Time Staff: 29.94%
- Seasonal Job Coaches: 8.82%
- Services & Materials: 2.16%

Key Investment Focus

- Majority of expenses directly support youth wages, ensuring funds are primarily invested in young people's earned income and work-based learning experiences.

2026 Impact to Date

- Approximately **\$320,000 in wages earned by Saint Paul youth** (includes both employer-paid and City-supported experiences)
- Approximately **\$500,000 in employer-paid wages will be leveraged in 2026** through partner-supported experiences



Budget Constraints/Risks

Right Track is facing increasing financial pressure as key funding sources decline while program costs and community demand continue to grow.

Key Financial Challenges

- \$100,000 annual reduction in DEED Youth at Work funding (SFY 2026–2027)
- Rising minimum wage costs
- Expiration of ARPA funding - (6.3 FTEs unfunded after 2026)
- Growing gap between available funding and community demand

2026 Program Impacts

- Mid Year (SY25-26) hours reduction for interns and early end to internships (1 month)
- Elimination of 2026–2027 school-year internships
- Elimination of the 2026 EMS Academy
- Reduction of more than 300 internship opportunities in 2026



Why the Training Wage Matters

Right Track internships are structured learning experiences, not traditional employment. Youth receive workforce training, career exploration, mentorship, and ongoing support from Job Coaches.

The Training Wage Allows Right Track To:

- Expand access for first-time workers and youth facing barriers
- Support nonprofit and community-based employers
- Invest in training, mentorship, and career development
- Maximize internship opportunities for Saint Paul youth

Impact of Eliminating the Training Wage (Summer 2025 Estimates)

- Program costs increase by **\$250,000+**
- Approximately **92 fewer internship opportunities**
- Reduced participation from nonprofit and small-business employers



Program Comparisons

Comparable Programs

Reported Data from 2025

Saint Paul, MN

City Size: 307,284
Youth Employed: 1,165
Budget: \$3,034,031

2025 Budget Considerations:
Reduction in ARPA funds
\$100,000 additional in DEED YAW

Minneapolis, MN

City Size: 423,250
Youth Employed: 659
Budget: \$3,745,000

Additional 726 youth
participated in a paid online
professional development

Boston, MA

City Size: 716,313
Youth Employed: 10,511
Budget: \$33.8M

\$10.5M in External Funding
Leveraged
\$23.3M in General Operating
Funds from City Budget



Investing In Saint Paul's Future

Youth employment programs are a strategic investment in Saint Paul's workforce, economy, and community wellbeing.

Workforce Development

Prepares Saint Paul's future workforce through career exploration, skill development, and hands-on experience.

Economic Mobility

Provides earned income for youth and families while building pathways to long-term career success.

Public Safety

Directly supports public safety by reducing youth disengagement and strengthening connections to caring adults and structured opportunities.



The Opportunity

Saint Paul youth are engaged and ready to learn, work, and lead. Demand for Right Track continues to far exceed available opportunities.

This year alone, more than **3,000 youth applied for approximately 700 summer positions**, with continued interest throughout the year.

This gap highlights a significant opportunity to expand access to high-quality, paid work-based learning experiences through coordinated City investment and public-private partnerships.

Estimated 9,146 High School Aged youth are income eligible in Saint Paul (of 16,629 HS aged youth) Additional barriers, would increase this number to an estimated 11,000+.

In 2024, we served about 13% of income eligible youth.

Expanding Access



Public Sector Engagement

- Require City departments to budget for and host Right Track interns
- Prioritize Right Track scholars before external internship programs
- Expand state and public agency participation at scale

Private Sector Partnerships

- Leverage City relationships to increase employer participation
- Establish expectations that City-affiliated businesses engage with or invest in Right Track
- Partner with major institutions (e.g., sports and entertainment venues) to host or sponsor cohorts of interns, expanding access in downtown and surrounding neighborhoods

Sponsorship Model

- Encourage businesses unable to host interns to sponsor internship experiences
- Position sponsorship as a direct investment in Saint Paul's youth and workforce pipeline

Sustainable Funding Strategy

- Broaden and diversify funding streams
- Engage new public and private funders
- Elevate youth workforce development as a legislative priority



Additional Opportunities to Engage

- Champion Right Track through your networks and partnerships
- Help identify and connect potential sponsors and funders
- Host Right Track interns and provide hands-on learning experiences
- Participate in career panels, workplace tours, and youth engagement opportunities





Thank You!