

Information Item

Date: February 14, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Johnnie Taylor, Assistant City Manager
Jennifer Chrysson, Operations Coordinator
Faith Bartlett, Project Supervisor

Subject:
Information on Initiative for At-Risk Youth - Positive Path Program

Strategic Focus Area: Safe and Secure Community

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



In 2012, the City of Winston-Salem received a three-year YouthBuild Grant through the Department of Labor. YouthBuild Winston-Salem was a six-month program that empowered high school dropouts to reclaim their lives and rebuild their communities through education, job training, and leadership development. Although the grant ended in December 2015, City Council continues to allocate funding.

Operations staff developed a new program with a mission to re-shape lives through Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) exposure, mentors, hands-on training, and life skills to enrich the future of our at-risk population aged 18 to 24. The proposed six-month program, Positive Path, will utilize a strategic curriculum and provide real-life examples of pro-social behavior. Participants are referred to as apprentices and paid the city's minimum wage, with the opportunity to obtain their GED and a National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certificate.

In addition to (STEAM) exposure, strategic components include one-on-one mentoring, hands-on training, engaging on-site visits, and obtaining personal and professional development. In addition, apprentices receive an additional six months of staff support, services, and incentives that may include transportation services, uniforms, and supplementary training courses.

The program marketing strategy includes targeted social media, radio, community calendars, and promotion through news outlets. Fliers and other tangible materials will circulate to our community partners, the WSPD/Sherriff's Office, the Department of Social Services, local libraries, the school system, and recreation centers in response to the digital divide.

Measurable data collected through the program include retention rates, GED/NCCER achievement, weekly participant surveys, pre and post-testing, attendance and recidivism rates. Data collection ensures robust future programming and accountability to City Council, City Leadership, future apprentices, and constituents.

Funding for Positive Path is allocated through the Crime Prevention Plan and includes the apprentices' salaries, supportive services, program staff salaries, supplies, and follow-up services. The total first-year cost is \$191,000.

Staff is seeking input from the City Council and the authorization to move forward with the beginning planning stages of the Positive Path Program.