



30,000 Feet Direct Appropriation

SFY 25 Legislative Report

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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 been involved 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 2025 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 experience 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 services¹. 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 2025 grant contract started on July 1, 2024 and ended on June 30, 2025. SFY 2025 grant funds were fully expended by the end of June 2025. 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	\$242,000.00
Total	\$380,000

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 2025.

DATA ON PARTICIPANTS SERVED – INDIVIDUAL SERVICES - (Cumulative for the SFY)

Total Individual Participants Served **95**

Gender	Number	Percentage
A. Female	63	66%
B. Male	32	34%
C. Other	0	0%
D. Prefer not to answer	0	0%

Age	Number	Percentage
A. 14 and under	40	42%
B. 14 – 15	31	33%
B. 16 – 17	21	22%
D. 18 – 21	3	3%
E. 22 – 24	0	0%

Ethnicity/Race	Number	Percentage
A. Hispanic/Latino	8	8%
B. American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0%
C. Asian/Pacific Islander	31	33%
D. Black or African American	51	54%

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

Ethnicity/Race	Number	Percentage
E. White	2	2%
F. Multiracial	3	3%
G. Not Disclosed	0	0%

Education Level	Number	Percentage
8th Grade, or under	0	0%
9th Grade -12th Grade	94	99%
High School graduate or equivalent	1	1%
Post-Secondary Education	0	0%

Other Demographics	Number	Percentage
A. Limited English Proficient	0	0%
B. Participant/Family Receiving Public Assistance	71	75%
C. Foster Youth	0	0%
D. Participants with a Disability	1	1%
E. High School Drop-Out	0	0%
F. Youth or Adult Offender	0	0%
G. Pregnant or Parenting Youth	0	0%
H. Basic Skills Deficient	45	47%
I. Homeless Individual or Runaway Youth	0	54%
J. Not Employed at Program Enrollment	89	94%
K. Veteran	0	0%
L. Economically Disadvantaged	91	96%

PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES -(Cumulative for the SFY)	Number	Percentage
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)	30	32%
B. Received Work Experience, Internship, or Apprenticeship Activities	30	32%
C. Received Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities	30	32%
D. Received Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities	30	32%
E. Received Mentoring Activities	30	32%
F. Received Support Services	29	31%
G. Received Financial Literacy Education	25	26%

INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES - (Cumulative for the SFY)	Number	Percentage
A. Attained Work Readiness Goals ²	65	68%
B. Attained Education Goals	59	62%
C. Received Academic Credit or Service-Learning Credit	0	0%
D. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Remained in School, Obtained a Certificate or Degree, or Dropout - Returned to School	2	2%
E. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, Apprenticeship, or Military	1	1%
F. Entered employment	4	4%

² Note that this excludes Kindergarten through 3rd grade youth served by 30K Feet.
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INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES - (Cumulative for the SFY)	Number	Percentage
G. Retained employment, increased wages or advanced career	15	16%
H. Completed Program Objective	30	32%

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FOR PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES - (Cumulative for the SFY)	Number	Percentage
A. Number of participants rating experience as “Excellent”	2	2%
B. Number of participants rating experience as “Very Good”	0	0%
C. Number of participants rating experience as “Average”	3	3%
D. Number of participants rating experience as “Below Average”	0	0%
E. Number of participants rating experience as “Poor”	0	0%
F. Total Number of Surveys Completed	5	5%

Success Stories

Academic Improvement: One kindergarten-level student who entered the program struggling with letter recognition and writing is now confidently decoding syllables and improving penmanship due to consistent engagement in our literacy curriculum.

Emotional Growth: A student initially shy and reluctant to participate in group literacy sessions became actively involved after observing peer support during reading activities. They now participate regularly, embodying the culture of safety and encouragement our program fosters.

Cultural Engagement: During Black History Month, we hosted interactive workshops that included cake decorating, cultural fabric art, and kaleidoscope building. These activities gave students a space to explore identity, culture, and creativity.

Social Integration: A nervous student who hesitated to join our program was warmly welcomed by a peer, showing the impact of our intentional community-building practices. By the second day, she was engaged and smiling—an early indicator of long-term belonging and success.

Employment Opportunities: Tech Geeks continue to prepare youth for unsubsidized employment through project-based coding education, resume building, and exposure to real-world career environments. All students receive guidance through courses in JavaScript, Python, and HTML/CSS and participate in mock interviews and resume clinics. This year, two former Tech Geeks students who completed our full program have successfully secured paid internships with HealthPartners. Both are now in college—one attending the University of Minnesota and the other at Texas Southern University.

New Facility: 30,000 Feet Arts & Tech Center’s new facility opened on Friday, October 17, 2025, in Saint Paul. The event included a ribbon-cutting ceremony, a tour of the newly completed space, and time to connect with community members and partners. The center is a modern, youth-focused facility designed to support arts, culture, and technology learning in a welcoming and creative environment. It features vibrant artwork, collaborative workspaces, and a design that reflects innovation and empowerment. Funds from 30,000 Feet’s Direct Appropriation was not used for the new facility, but youth will benefit highly from the programming offered in the new facility.