

Summit Academy OIC awarded five grants totaling \$1.65 million

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Thanks to national and local grants totaling \$1.65 million, Summit Academy OIC will expand its healthcare training and further enhance its construction programs while working to decrease the employment gap that exists for communities of color in the Twin Cities.

The Minneapolis-based nonprofit, which provides educational and vocational training to individuals from economically depressed neighborhoods, plans to add evening classes, offer training at satellite locations in St. Paul and beyond, and increase enrollment to ensure even more individuals are able to become educated, employed, contributing members of society.

The president of Summit Academy OIC Louis King said "We are immensely grateful for the support of these five foundations, which illustrates a broad commitment to improve the vitality of this region by developing a diverse workforce with employable skills for the future."

"We have achieved great success in our construction program and put hundreds of people to work," said King. "We are confident we can duplicate that success in the growing field of healthcare, which is experiencing increased demand due to our aging population."

Summit Academy OIC provides 20-week training "with no out of pocket cost," said King.

2013 year-end grants earmarked to expand healthcare and construction trainings include:

- **The Kresge Foundation** - Troy, Mich. (\$600,000 over 3 years) to support the expansion of the healthcare program including the addition of evening classes and also provide construction training in satellite locations.
- **Northwest Area Foundation** – St. Paul, Minn. (\$500,000) to support the expansion of the healthcare program including the addition of evening classes and provide construction training in satellite locations as well as enhance the Northside Community Response Team's (NCRT)

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efforts to reduce poverty and dependency on county assistance in North Minneapolis.

- **The McKnight Foundation** – Minneapolis, Minn. (\$250,000) to support capacity building initiatives for increased enrollment and job placement related to the Minnesota Multi-Purpose Stadium project.
- **Wider Opportunities for Women, in Conjunction with Walmart's Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative*** – Washington, DC (\$200,000 over 2 years) to support Summit's Women Wear Hard Hats Too program and provide technical assistance to other workforce development agencies across the country to launch their own women-in-construction programs modeled after Summit's successful programming.
- **Minneapolis Foundation** – Minneapolis, Minn. (\$100,000) to support increased capacity for enrollment and job placement, including the expansion of the healthcare program and the addition of evening classes.

In addition to its successful construction programs, Summit Academy OIC currently provides healthcare training for individuals to become Community Health Workers, Pharmacy Technicians and Certified Nursing Assistants.

Summit plans to double enrollment in its healthcare programs and increase overall annual enrollment to 1,000 by 2016. Summit placed nearly 300 graduates in healthcare and construction jobs in 2013.

"The most important thing is we are offering night classes now," said King.

We put more training for careers within in grasp for people who can't go to school during the day or for 3 or 4 years."

Vice president of programs and chief program officer for Northwest Area Foundation Gary Cunningham said "We are pleased to work with Summit Academy OIC to help reduce poverty, increase self-sufficiency and decrease the employment gap that exists for people of color in Minnesota."

Private philanthropic and foundation investments make up more than half of Summit's annual revenue.

McKnight Foundation program officer Sarah Hernandez said "Summit Academy OIC has a long history of helping unemployed and underemployed people improve their lives through training and job placement," said. "Aligned with McKnight's efforts to foster vibrant communities with opportunities for all, we value their work and their belief that the best social service program in the world is a job."

King said the Black community of North Minneapolis suffers from the biggest disparity. "67 percent(of African or African-Americans) are on some type of county assistance in North Minneapolis."

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Demographic estimates show that, by 2040, people of color will represent nearly 45 percent of the Twin Cities' population due to an aging population and an increase in the number of people of color in the area.

"The demographic shift coupled with disproportionately high unemployment rates that exist in communities of color will cause a major workforce shortage unless we make some serious changes," King said. "We have an obligation to develop solutions that will decrease the gaps.

"Our course offerings are tied to a demographic shift," said King. "Our growing healthcare and construction programs will help meet the need now and into the future."

Recently, Summit Academy OIC and its community partners were chosen by the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA) to serve as the Employment Assistance Firm (EAF) for the construction of the Minnesota Multi-Purpose Stadium. The group will identify qualified workers, and provide training and placement to ensure the project employs a highly-skilled diverse workforce. The MSFA has committed to meet the city-mandated goals of employing 32 percent minorities and six percent women on the construction of the stadium.

King said enrollment of women in the construction program has risen from 3 percent to 20 percent and job placement is above 90 percent.

For more information, visit www.saoic.org .