Investment Connection Online Proposal

Mayor's Youth Academy Virtual Career Connection

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Name of organization	Office of Community Wealth Building
Mission statement	The mission of the Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB) is to create policy and structural change resulting in a coherent ladder out of poverty for our lowest-income residents. This ladder will be established through access to quality employment and related supports, bolstering the community and economic assets of low-income communities and creating healthy neighborhoods and educational opportunities to improve the life chances of Richmond's most distressed and underserved population.
Overview of organization	The City of Richmond launched a holistic poverty reduction program encompassing several policy areas, including education, employment, housing, transportation, and health, with the aim of both building stronger pathways for families to transition from poverty to self-sufficiency and effecting community and neighborhood change. The OCWB coordinates the program through partnerships across multiple City agencies as well as extensive collaboration with agencies and organizations outside of the City government. The OCWB recognizes that poverty is a function of inadequate income and that sustained full-time employment is the best antidote to poverty. Developing more effective mechanisms to connect under-employed residents to existing job opportunities, as well as creating more job opportunities accessible to high-poverty neighborhoods, must be at the core of an effective anti-poverty strategy. However, success in employment closely links to preparation through education, as well as the removal of common barriers under-employed residents face, such as inadequate transportation and inadequate access to child care. Both access to quality employment and educational success, in turn, are deeply impacted by the dense concentration of poverty present in

	Richmond, particularly in and around the City's major public housing communities. The Office's concentration on eradicating the impact of poverty includes its emphasis on empowering and encouraging sustainable families. The Mayor's Youth Academy represents the youth-focused component of this effort. The vitality of our City depends on the success of youth-centered programs like the Mayor's Youth Academy. It presents a unique opportunity for each contributor to invest in changing the odds for teens with barriers to equitable access to safe neighborhoods, adequate education, and economic stability.
Website	**http://www.richmondgov.com/CommunityWealthBuilding/index.aspx**
State where proposal is located	Virginia - Richmond City
Proposal title	**Mayor's Youth Academy Virtual Career Connection**
Support request	▪ Investment/Grant
Requested amount	$200,000
Proposal narrative	In thriving communities, residents have access to opportunities that build wealth and health. Economic and workforce development begins with education. The Virtual Career Connection (VCC) attempts to level the playing field for teens and develop talent. Engaging youth in credential attainment and soft skills development is the first step in changing the odds for our youth and increasing their economic and social mobility. An award of this magnitude will provide the resources necessary to add an innovative initiative to address these disparities for more youth who share this reality. In light of COVID-19, we would need to offer virtual programming and access to our teens to ensure they have the opportunity to move up the ladder towards success. The VCC will provide teens up to 6-weeks to foster soft skills development while yielding esoteric growth, credential attainment, and financial reward. Through this experience, teens will hone financial literacy skills to promote healthy financial lifestyles and target career choices with the highest growth potential as they outline their plans to pursue and succeed in that career choice. The following outlines the VCC: • Soft skills development through YouScience and Ready to Win curriculums. • Certified credential training for Adobe, Microsoft Office, or coding. • Community service and engagement projects for applied learning and experience. • End of program presentations that summarize and demonstrate knowledge and skills.

	Our outline will expose youth to entrepreneurial options, resume writing, and mock interviews. As part of VCC, teens will explore cultural awareness, multicultural sensitivity, equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion. Research indicates that one's sense of self begins when individuals learn to appreciate his or her cultural competencies. This program will enable teens to begin or continue, that journey of identification, acceptance, and appreciation. The VCC will require the purchase of 50 laptops and hotspots, as 25 percent of our participants do not have access to computers or the internet. Software licensing and testing for certifications will also be purchased as part of this grant opportunity. Overall, the Mayor's Youth Academy promotes the growth of teens who embrace the importance of becoming college-eligible and employment-ready, as well as socially and emotionally prepared for sustainable futures.
Issues addressed	- Broadband Services / Digital Inclusion - Disaster Relief - Workforce Development / Economic Development
Geographic impact	City-wide
Population served	This opportunity will be offered to City of Richmond teens, ages 14-17, the majority of which are members of families who are experiencing economic hardship and/or live in distressed and underserved communities or do not enjoy the privilege of essential familial wealth.
Population income	This opportunity will be offered to City of Richmond teens, ages 14-17, the majority of which are members of families who are below 50% the area median income.
Anticipated outcomes or impact	Seventy-five percent (75%) of VCC participants will complete the program in addition to the following outcomes and impacts: - Quality: Leverage subject matter experts in 100% of programming efforts - Engagement: Make 200 teen connections - Skills: (1) Increase exposure to soft skills development (Emotion Management, Initiative, Inclusion, Empathy, Time Management, Responsibility, Decision Making, Effective Communication, Teamwork, Innovation, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Branding, Personal Development, Self-Awareness, and Flexibility) by 50%; (2) Increase access to credential attainment opportunities by 75%

	• Transfer: (1) 200 teens will be provided with workforce development opportunities and be employable; (2) 75% of teen participants will earn a transferable credential
Evaluation methods used to measure success	The Mayor's Youth Academy will use the following quantitative and qualitative methods of measurement for the VCC based on the program outline and impact statements above. • Pre- and post-test for YOU Science and Ready to Win soft skills curriculums demonstrating that at least 80% of participants complete and master the subject material. • Pre- and post-test for certified credential attainment, demonstrating that 75% of participants earn a credential in Adobe, Microsoft, or coding. • Survey of participants measuring overall experiences with the program and qualitative feedback. • Survey of experts and community partners measuring their qualitative feedback for participants and overall program.
Project timeframe. Is your request for an existing or new program?	• Existing Program