

Comprehensive Policy on Youth Study Proposal 08.06

1. Describe your project idea, including clearly defining the problems and specific policy questions to be addressed.

The public and policy makers do not understand the value and possibilities for better comprehensive youth policy -- policy that looks at the investments we make during the first 2 decades of life because they are stuck in silos. A study group from different sectors needs to review and consider new ways to assure all youth can succeed at work, college, life and citizenship by age 21.

2. Why is this problem important?

A more comprehensive policy frame would lead to a better set of indicators and more appropriate allocations and accountability over time - allocations aligned with developmental not just deficit goals.

3. How could the Citizens League make a unique contribution?

At the University of Minnesota we are exploring the development of a 12 to 18 month process on this topic getting input from around the state. The Citizens League would be a terrific partner in this effort.

4. What are prospects that project would yield recommendations that could be implemented and have a major impact on the problem?

Several state legislative officials are interested as well as agency and private funders so impact is possible if done well.

5. Explain how this problem can be addressed by data, research, and reason? Identify probable sources for data and research.

This effort builds off a national effort by the Forum for Youth Investment and the National Conference of State Legislators Youth Policy Institute that have many respected national partners (including United Way). We have researchers at the U interested and are trying to develop a timeline for careful study and input that could lead to a new comprehensive youth policy frame for 2010.

6. Explain how this proposal can be framed without partisan bias.

The national and several other state and regional efforts underway are from different political perspectives and all the partners are non-partisan or bi-partisan. The University will not be involved if it becomes partisan. Bipartisan support is essential for success and a critical component of establishing a lasting policy frame.

7. Why would this project be attractive to members?

Children and youth are at the center of many issues that concern members. Looking more broadly at how we --citizens, communities, government, non-profits, and the private sector -- support their development and success in life is a frame that has been demonstrated to have wide appeal.

8. How would this project reach out to under-represented segments of the community?

This frame is driven by a recognition of the need to change the way we work if we are going to change the odds that our youth - all youth -- succeed. It has a strong equity orientation and will need clear voices from all sectors to succeed. Much of our failures to support youth are related to the wide range of disparities that exist and which a comprehensive youth policy approach would have to address.

9. What is the potential for making this issue visible to a broader public? Why?

The potential is quite high as significant resources go into children and youth issues and this approach says lets coordinate our investments -- especially those in K-12 education, early childhood education, and community learning opportunities in the non-school hours -- as well as those in health, public safety, and human services..

10. What resources—funding, experts, etc. might be available to support this project?

We are developing possibilities for significant investment in this effort in public and private ways. The Citizens League could connect to this larger process in useful ways.