



April 16, 2020

Rep. Tim Mahoney
Rep. Bob Gunther

Subject: Workforce Development Funding

Dear Chair Mahoney and Ranking Minority Member Gunther:

Thank you for your leadership in these uncertain times, our economy and jobs are in flux and our communities are scared but resilient. At the heart of Ujamaa Place is the “Ujamaa Man” whose enrollment into the Theory of Transformation (TOT) programming, results in a transformative empowering experience of teaching African American men, aged 18-30, how to navigate inequality, poverty and a criminal justice system built to perpetuate recidivism.

Since 2010, over 4,500 African American men have utilized 37 transformation services at no charge from Ujamaa Place, which include 1,000 men 18-30, who completed housing, behavior health, education, employment development and workforce training enrolled in the Ujamaa Place trademark Theory of Transformation program model.

In 2019, Ujamaa served 1,164 men compared to 1,311 in 2018, with 147 exits, which comprised a mixture of new enrollments, attrition, aging-out, return to prison, voluntary/involuntary exits, referrals.

The Q4 2019 data reported:

- 330 men were enrolled in the Theory of Transformation, a 30% YoY increase from 233 in Q4 2018.
- 989 transformation services were used: Bus passes, meals, gas cards, gift cards, haircuts, petty cash and tokens. Participants meet with their coach regularly to review the use of services to reach their goals outlined in their Individual Transformation Plan. [Transformation Stories](#)
- Employment rate during this same period improved YoY to 57% from 76% in Q4 2018 attributed to increased employment partnerships who provided stability to the men by providing employment job training and opportunities to earn a living wage and value to the employment partner, by providing skilled labor to fill jobs in their peak season.
- Ujamaa Place hired two Ujamaa men to fill support positions.
- An Ujamaa Alumni who started a cleaning company that employs Ujamaa men obtained a contract with the building management and was recently elected to the Board of Directors of Ujamaa Place.
- Hourly wage remains a challenging destabilizer for the men at \$11.62 per hour in Q4 2019. The employment living wage goal for Ujamaa men is \$18 per hour and \$25 provides basic needs of their family.
- 94 men took advantage of employment services (496 instances)
- 34 men worked Ujamaa events through paid internships
- 4 men graduated [Automotive Certification Training](#) course



- 4 men graduated the [Ujamaanomics Cultural Financial Literacy](#) Training course
- In Q4 2019, there were 54 men who “aged out” (30 years old) of the Theory of Transformation programming and will stay connected to Ujamaa Place as “Alumni” status. The men who require additional long-term support services are referred to partner programs i.e. Better Futures, My Home, Union Gospel Mission, YWCA St., to name a few. Ujamaa Place has non-restricted funding that supports some of their continued needs at Ujamaa Place as an “Alumni” of the program based on need.
- Ujamaa Place has consistently reported a recidivism rate of 4%.

What Ujamaa Place would do with the additional \$500,000.

- It would help Ujamaa Place increase capacity by employing 5 Ujamaa Men full-time in support services roles at a living wage of \$18.00 per hour. (\$187,200)
- It would enable Ujamaa Place to enroll 25 more men in the Theory of Transformation’s wraparound programs at a \$6,000 per participant annual cost.(\$150,000)
- It would enable Ujamaa Place to 1 full-time high context contacts and 1 full-time behavior health clinician to support the 25 new participants. (\$162,800)

The State of Minnesota is going to be experiencing an economic roller coaster in the coming months and years. Making sure that our workforce is prepared to meet the new challenges of what a post COVID-19 economy is going to look like should be a priority. The Minnesota legislature has an opportunity to make sure that all members of our community are trained, employed and participating in society. Ujamaa Place has been an excellent steward of State resources in the past and would strive to do so again.

For your information, here is a 2019 Data Analysis of Ujamaa Place’s Employment and Education Data Analysis:

<http://www.ujamaaplace.org/2019-data-analysis.html>

Please don’t hesitate to contact me at xxx-xxxx if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Otis Zander – CEO Ujamaa Place

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