

City Youth Investment Proposal

2026 | Summer Youth Engagement

Submitted by: Navigators | Project Kindred, Inc.

Prepared for: City of Milwaukee Consideration

Timeframe: June 13 through October 15, 2026

Request: \$150,000

Matching Support: \$100,000

Total Leveraged Investment: \$250,000

Proposal Summary

A \$150,000 City investment, matched with \$100,000 in partner support, will help the Project Kindred Navigators network expand youth engagement from June through October 2026. Funding will support day camp-connected opportunities with The Kellogg PEAK Initiative, Pathmakers civic leadership experiences, youth storytelling and media pathways, stipends, partner coordination, and shared follow-up systems.

Together, these efforts will help young people explore Milwaukee, build relationships, connect to services and future pathways, and move from participation to reflection, leadership, storytelling, civic voice, and action.

Purpose

This proposal requests City support to expand summer youth opportunities, overnight immersions, youth-led civic action, storytelling and media pathways, partner coordination, and follow-up. Funding will support facilitators, youth support staff, transportation, meals and snacks, supplies, stipends, safety support, shared tracking tools, referrals, reporting, and partner follow-up.

Young people will take part in leadership, wellness, civic learning, MKEQuest exploration, team projects, and storytelling experiences while connecting to trusted adults, community-based organizations, youth services, and spaces where their voice can help shape what comes next.

The investment will also support shared tools, including baseline entry questions, youth interest forms, participation records, session check-ins, partner feedback, referrals, surveys, and reporting. Many partners already use these tools separately. This support helps connect that information so it can benefit young people, families, partners, employers, funders, and the City instead of staying isolated inside individual programs.

Over time, this will help partners route young people to matched opportunities, lift up strong community-based organizations, and give the City a clearer picture of community assets, service gaps, workforce pathways, youth voice, and future investment opportunities.

Scope of Work

1. Day Camp-Connected Opportunities

Navigators will work with The Kellogg PEAK Initiative and partners to bring leadership, wellness, civic learning; MKEQuest, and connections to youth services into PEAK Day Camp and across Milwaukee. PEAK provides a trusted summer camp setting where young people already gather for indoor and outdoor experiences, team-building, leadership development, recreation, and adult-supported learning. Navigators will build on that foundation with self-discovery, civic exploration, partner connections, and follow-up opportunities.

For example, young people will explore Milwaukee's working waterways through a guided MKEQuest experience. Before the trip, they will use camp time to build background knowledge, name what they already know about water, and connect the theme to their daily lives. During the experience, they will visit the harbor and nearby partner sites, follow clues about how water shapes daily life, food, health, jobs, transportation, the environment, and city decisions, and meet people in maritime, logistics, environmental, and public service roles.

After the trip, reflection and follow-up activities will help young people name what they learned, identify what they care about, and share what opportunities or questions they want to explore next. This gives young people an early role in shaping their own pathway and helps partners understand what supports, services, and future experiences may fit them best.

Expected reach: 150 to 200 young people reached through added PEAK camp experiences
Funds may support facilitators, partner-led activities, materials, transportation coordination, meals and snacks, youth engagement tools, safety support, and follow-up.

2. Pathmakers Civic Challenge Cohort

Navigators will support overnight and multi-day civic challenge experiences where young people build relationships, explore community issues, learn how power and decisions shape change, practice leadership, and work in teams. This work builds from the 2025–2026 cohort year, when Pathmakers identified health equity gaps as a key issue affecting Milwaukee youth and planned a free, youth-led, youth-powered Summer Kickback on June 13 to connect young people to wellness resources, care, summer opportunities, and positive programming.

Through the Pathmakers Civic Challenge, young people will go deeper into what they want to address, amplify, or change. They will study Milwaukee, take part in guided exploration, learn how local systems work, understand how those systems shape their lives, and prepare ideas for action.

For example, young people may take part in an overnight Root Action Summit at Marquette University, where they stay on campus and study a selected issue, strength, or opportunity affecting Milwaukee. With support from the City, researchers, archivists, community storytellers, and partners, they will examine what shaped it, what keeps it in place, what has already been tried, and what it takes to address or amplify solutions. They take part in MKEQuest-style city

exploration, visit selected spaces around Milwaukee, map what they see, identify who is affected and who has decision-making power, and learn how change can happen at the personal, community, organizational, and government levels, including through City Hall.

Young people will then move from learning into ownership. They will design and present a youth-led project, action step, or recommendation based on what they learn, with the opportunity to share ideas and feedback with EYAAC and other citywide youth leadership partners. Through this process, young people practice taking responsibility for what comes next and begin to see themselves as part of the solution, not just participants in a program.

Modest stipends support those taking on responsibilities beyond attendance, including teamwork, planning, reflection, peer leadership, issue exploration, power mapping, project development, presentations, and follow-up. Stipends will be tied to role, time, participation, and completion.

Expected reach: 25 young people in deeper leadership and civic learning

Expected stipend range: \$300 to \$500 per young person, based on role and completion

Participation support may help reduce barriers such as transportation, supplies, and meals.

3. Youth Storytelling, Media, and Innovation Pathways

Navigators will connect summer youth engagement to emerging innovation district opportunities, including storytelling, media, communications, documentary filmmaking, and technology pathways. Through related efforts such as the CultureCrafters cohort, young people from partner organizations will learn photography, videography, interviewing, research, editing, and ethical storytelling while documenting youth programs, services, events, and opportunities.

From June 22 through August 8, 2026, CultureCrafters participants will work in production teams focused on sports, gardening, the arts, and literacy. With support from local storytellers, filmmakers, cinematographers, and media professionals, young people will visit community sites, interview partners, gather footage, and create documentary trailers that help other young people discover opportunities for engagement, leadership, and personal growth.

This pathway gives young people a youth-led role in telling the story of Milwaukee's youth development ecosystem. They are not only learning technical skills. They are documenting what is working, lifting up trusted partners, and making opportunities more visible to young people, families, partners, employers, funders, and the City.

By the end of summer, each team will complete a documentary trailer. Youth teams may continue toward a spring 2027 film premiere, with potential alignment with MKE Film Festival. Production teams may document partners such as TBEY, TRUE Skool, Inpower, Beckum-Stapleton Little League, I Have a Dream Foundation, Taylor-Made Foundation, Alice's Garden, and Cr8tv House, depending on final availability.

Expected reach: 8 young people

Expected result: Young people build media, storytelling, research, and communications skills while helping partner organizations share their work and connect more youth to opportunities.

4. Partner Coordination

Navigators will help build a coordinated youth-serving network that connects young people to the right opportunities, helps partners make better use of resources, and gives Milwaukee a clearer picture of youth needs, trusted community assets, service gaps, workforce pathways, and future investment opportunities.

This investment will support early infrastructure for that network. Before youth experiences begin, Navigators can use baseline entry questions to understand each young person's interests, needs, strengths, goals, and current connections. During programming, youth check-ins, peer-to-peer feedback, session feedback, and partner observations can help identify how young people are showing up, where they are growing, what barriers may be present, and what opportunities may fit next.

This creates a clearer feedback loop between young people, families, youth-serving organizations, schools, City departments, employers, corporations, funders, workforce partners, and community-based organizations. It helps partners meet young people where they are and connect them to the right next experience so they can keep growing with the right support.

For example, after a young person takes part in PEAK Day Camp, Root Action, CultureCrafters, or another summer experience, Navigators can use youth interest forms, check-ins, peer reflections, partner feedback, and participation records to identify what they want or need next. A young person may be connected to a health resource, arts program, employment opportunity, mentor, sports program, service project, media pathway, technology experience, or civic action opportunity.

Many partners already use intake forms, surveys, check-ins, referrals, and feedback tools. This investment helps connect those efforts so information does not stay isolated inside separate programs. Instead, youth feedback, peer reflections, participation records, partner observations, and referral patterns can help young people find better next steps, help partners improve coordination, help employers and workforce partners understand future talent, help funders see where strong work is happening, and help the City make better decisions about future youth investment.

This also helps strong community-based organizations become more visible, including organizations that may not always have the time, staff, or grant-writing capacity to be seen. Young people who opt in may also share ideas through surveys, listening sessions, panels, testimonials, video reflections, digital prompts, and connections to EYAAC or other citywide advisory spaces. Over time, this will help Milwaukee build a stronger engagement system that connects direct experiences, partner referrals, workforce pathways, citywide youth voice, and future civic action.

Expected result: Young people get clearer next steps, partners work better together, strong organizations become more visible, and Milwaukee builds a stronger long-term system for youth voice, services, referrals, workforce pathways, and opportunity.

Investment Breakdown

Investment Area	City Investment
PEAK camp experiences, MKEQuest, and youth storytelling	\$35,000
Civic leadership pathway and overnight immersions	\$45,000
Youth stipends	\$10,000
Transportation, meals, supplies, and safety support	\$25,000
Partner coordination, tracking, follow-up, and reporting	\$20,000
Program administration and implementation support	\$15,000
Total City Request	\$150,000

The City investment will be matched with \$100,000 in partner support, including in-kind resources, partner time, space, supplies, program support, and additional funding.

Expected Reach and ROI

Area	Expected Result
Day Camp	150 to 200 young people reached through added PEAK camp experiences
Civic Cohort	25 young people in deeper civic leadership
Youth Storytelling	8 young people build media, research, and storytelling skills
Youth stipends	\$300 to \$500 per young person, based on role and completion
Partner engagement	Partners coordinated around shared youth opportunities
Follow-up system	Youth interest forms, referrals, records, and feedback
Long-term value	More young people connected to future services and opportunities

Closing

This investment will help Milwaukee move from one-time youth activities to a connected youth engagement system. With City support, young people will have more places to go, more trusted adults to connect with, more ways to lead, and clearer next steps into services, civic voice, storytelling, media, and future opportunities.

It builds on youth-led work already underway and helps turn summer participation into long-term connection. City support will deepen youth-led work, expand citywide exploration, connect youth to partners and civic pathways, and keep them connected beyond the summer.

