

## Executive Summary

### “No foster youth should face the summit alone.”

Did you know that foster youth are 5 times more likely to experience homelessness as adults than their peers who never entered foster care? Foster youth face significant challenges when they age out of the system. Without strong support networks, many struggle with homelessness, unemployment, and instability. Statistics show that former foster youth experience higher rates of substance abuse, incarceration, and financial hardships compared to their peers. Our social venture, Summit Steps, seeks to bridge this gap by providing targeted career training, mentorship, and job placement services to help foster youth transition successfully into the workforce and build stable, independent lives.

Summit Steps' solution is a comprehensive career development and job placement program designed for foster youth. We aim to connect foster youth with our career training partners like Seattle Central College, where they can earn certifications from different career fields, and upon successful completion, we connect them with job opportunities. We will be the bridge that connects foster youth ages 18-25 with job opportunities while also providing personalized career coaching to help identify strengths and interests. Additionally, our program offers training in resume building, cover letter writing, interview skills, and professional etiquette. Beyond job readiness, we connect each participant with a mentor who can guide them in developing essential life skills and provide ongoing support throughout their career journey.

Our organization addresses two key gaps in the market: the lack of career guidance for foster youth and the labor shortages in essential industries. By offering training and placement in high-demand fields such as healthcare, skilled trades, and customer service, we are empowering young individuals with valuable skills while also supplying businesses with a trained workforce. Many companies struggle to find reliable entry-level employees, and our venture will provide them with motivated candidates who are ready for the workforce while they receive the chance to support an important social cause.

Foster youth will likely hesitate to engage with programs that feel complicated or impersonal. To build trust, we focus on a hands-on, community-driven approach. We plan to partner with local businesses, government agencies, educational institutions, and other nonprofits that support foster youth. By working with organizations already embedded in the foster care system, we hope to give foster youth some of the help they need the most. These partnerships will aid us in providing holistic support and create a robust network of resources for both participants and employers.

Summit Steps' placement fees are carefully set to ensure affordability without compromising quality. Our financial plan is built on the earnings forecast, both from earned and unearned revenue generated from grants and a conscientiously planned marketing budget.

**Vision Statement:** A world where foster youth can heal from their past and step into a future with hope and opportunities.

**Mission Statement:** Empowering foster youth by providing technical skills, career coaching, and mentorship while connecting them with businesses committed to hiring diverse, young professionals.