



**Tri-County
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

Established in 1965, the mission of the Tri-County Urban League, Inc. is to advance the regional economy and quality of life in Central Illinois by promoting education and improving the employability skills, self-sufficiency, and social well-being of African Americans and people in need. For 50 years, the agency has been operating and delivering services to economically and socially deprived individuals in the Peoria area.

Our TSTM program consists of eight different components to address the strengths and needs of the youth in the community. It is designed to address areas such as life-skills, goal setting, time management, positive thinking, problem solving, and soft skills. These skills are necessary for successful transition through school, higher education and in careers. Special Counseling and life coaching will be provided for the students as they make high school program, college, and career decisions. The Staff will work with the school guidance counselors and educators to ensure students take the appropriate courses required for admittance into various colleges and college programs. Services through the High School TSTM program are provided for high school students (grades 9 - 12), middle school (grades 5 – 8) and elementary school (grades 2-4). The High School group serves approximately 55 - 75 youth. The Middle and Primary group will serve approximately 100-200 youth. We are adding an additional TSTM College for 50-100 college students. While we do not consider our Daycare services a part of TSTM, our relationship with children starts at 6 weeks.



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Programming will take place on-site at schools, afterschool at our location as well as other facilities around the community through partnerships with other organizations. Finally, we will host programs on weekends as events demand. We will also assist college students with career readiness, pre-apprenticeship/career exploration programs, and entrepreneurial clinics. Each structured session provides at least one to two hours of direct service. This will consist of structured discussion groups, guest speakers, and activities. Students will complete an Individual College Development Plan upon enrollment into the program, which includes self-assessments for academic and career preparation. Assessments will include information on the student's career and academic goals and measures to take to reach his or her goals. Students will also be given a reading and math assessment to demonstrate minimum grade appropriate competency in mathematics and reading. Information from the assessments is gathered and the results are analyzed. Tutoring will be offered to TSTM students in advanced mathematics, science, and other subject areas by staff and volunteers. Our lead Math/Science tutor is known across the city for successfully providing instruction and guidance to over 1,000 youth and young adults in grades K-12, and also college. Additionally, actual contact with individuals working in engineering, mathematics, science, and other related fields is provided through field trips, to research centers, universities, engineering firms, national meetings of scientific organizations, etc. Our goal is to remain connected with students along their full life's continuum and leverage our social capital to provide access to meaning careers. We do this because research suggests intervention is most successful when done early and often.



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One-year scholarships will be awarded to minority graduating high school seniors who achieve specified grade point averages ranging from 3.0 - 4.0. Throughout the school year we check grades to identify tutoring needs. Children will be required to get tutored (or some related activity) for grades below a C. The TSTM program will strongly encourage and provide students with opportunities to fulfill a minimum of 20 hours of community service at the Tri-County Urban League and other designated locations within the city throughout the year. The objective is to encourage students to give back to their community. We believe “to whom much is given, much is required”. The program will also help youth learn to apply life skills that will lead to positive thinking, problem solving, and ways to reduce vulnerability of other risk factors of people with disadvantaged circumstances. Being active in the program builds self-esteem and educational improvement. The activity assists with their learning and future success in the community. This year, we will also incorporate a Digital Citizenship Component to overall programming under the direction of the new CEO.

The TSTM program collaborates with hundreds of organizations and business professionals throughout the community and the entire nation. They include neighboring agencies and organizations, businesses, as well as the Peoria Public Schools, Illinois Central College, Bradley University, Caterpillar Inc, and the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) in order to fulfill requirements for participants to obtain diversified knowledge and positive experience both educationally and socially. We have worked closely with these agencies in an effort to increase the effectiveness of the TSTM program. These programs include Girls Light Our Way (GLOW), Girls Who Code,



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iSTEAM, and STEM Illinois. We host an Annual Youth Awards Banquet to recognize TSTM students who successfully participated in the program and to acquaint the community with the various activities of TSTM. During the summer months we host slight less rigorous programming such as DJ school, horseback riding, human foosball tournaments, swimming and rowing lessons. However, the program participants are taught to identify the STEAM-based components within the activities. Finally, our programming has a mentoring component designed to check in with the students. Their lives and circumstances are not easy. However, we give them tools to cope and thrive in the midst of it. The TSTM is designed to help the whole child as we work to uplift the family system throughout other parts of our organization.