



COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION

JANUARY 2004

## BEST Awardees Share Outstanding Results

The Building Essential Skills Through Training, (BEST) Program's first round of projects come to a close this spring. At a recent meeting of awardees, funders had the opportunity to hear some success stories generated from this initiative.

Gerry Mauretti, Chief Executive Officer and President of Engineered Yarns of Fall River (a BEST recipient) opened the presentations with some strong praise for the BEST Initiative, "The private sector involvement in this initiative is probably the best that I have experienced in many years. A public and private partnership at its best is what we have experienced."

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*Gerry Mauretti, Chief Executive Officer and President of Engineered Yarns spoke about his experience with the BEST Initiative.*

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## CommCorp Forges "Pathways to Success"

Commonwealth Corporation and its Board of Directors recently established a Youth Committee, which is developing a new initiative that both complements and builds upon work already being done through CommCorp's Center for Youth Development and Education (CYDE). The initiative, **Pathways to Success by 21 (P21)**, supports aligning youth services in Massachusetts, particularly for those young people most at risk.

P21 will convene key stakeholders and leaders at the state, regional and local levels for the purpose of:

- Helping all youth to succeed in high school,

postsecondary education and training, and the labor market.

- Better aligning state-sponsored programs to effectively serve youth
- Attracting new investments in youth to the Commonwealth.

Project partners will include not only the state and local government agencies that represent education, workforce and human services, but employers, youth and families, the criminal justice system, education and service providers, and private foundations.

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## Pathways to Success

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In Massachusetts many young people are “at-risk” of not succeeding in the workforce, including high school dropouts, youth with disabilities, court-involved youth, pregnant and parenting youth, ethnic and linguistic minorities, and others.

The value of education as it relates to success



Source: Bureau of the Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Published by Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY, Oskaloosa, Iowa

in the workforce is clear. Analysis of the 2000 Census has shown a clear link between education levels and earnings, as may be seen in the graph at left. Better alignment of services, and greater investment in youth services will help ensure that all young people have the opportunity to succeed in school and beyond.

## BEST Awardees

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Grants were awarded in early 2002 to six consortia for industry-sector initiatives ranging from healthcare to financial services to biotechnology. In the two years since, over 2,550 participants have received training and/or education, helping them gain marketability in new careers or gain new skills to move up career pathways in their current industries.

Additionally, all projects engaged in career mapping and career ladder development to create new opportunities for career mobility within companies and sectors.

At the January meeting, representatives of the funder organizations, including the Department of Workforce Development, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Division of Unemployment Assistance, the Division of Career Services, the Department of Education, and Commonwealth Corporation had the chance to hear first-

hand the experience of program managers, and employers in implementing and running this innovative initiative.

While the benefits for employees of such programs may be more obvious; entry into growth industries, skills for career advancement, access to wages and benefits, and opportunities for further education, the benefits for employers should not be overlooked or underestimated. Companies identified gains such as higher retention rates, reduced worker shortages, industry-driven curricula with ties to training institutions for future training, and increased efficiency and productivity.

As one Immunogen manager involved in the Biomanufacturing Consortium stated, “This project significantly reduced our recruitment costs and time. I was thrilled with the quality of the resumes I received.”

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Mitt Romney, Governor; Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor; Jane C. Edmonds, Director, Mass. DWD; Jonathan Raymond, President, CommCorp