



COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION

NOV/DEC 2005

## P-21: A Year of Accomplishment and Challenge

**F**or the past two years, state and local officials have been meeting to focus attention on the increasing number of vulnerable and disconnected youth—a growing issue in Massachusetts. The **Pathways to Success by 21** (P-21) initiative seeks to develop policy and program solutions to address the growing number of older youth who are out of school and unemployed. P-21 is led by Commissioner of Education David Driscoll and Workforce Development Director Jane C. Edmonds and is supported by staff from Commonwealth Corporation. More than 16<sup>TM</sup> youth-serving agencies at the state level are partners in P-21.

P-21 represents a bold new effort to improve the future prospects of youth aged 16-24 who are out-of-school,

without diplomas, unemployed, or without the necessary skills to access good careers and become productive citizens. It is also an effort on the part of local communities to examine how they can deliver coordinated youth services at the local levels.

Like many other states, Massachusetts is seeing an increase in the number of youth experiencing difficulties transitioning into employment and adulthood. Each year three percent of Massachusetts high school students drop out before graduating. Some estimates suggest that the four-year dropout rate across the state may reach as high as 30 percent, and that there are significant disparities for ethnic and linguistic minorities.

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### BayStateWorks Success Story: Franklin Hampshire Supervisor Training

**T**he Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board, in collaboration with the UMass Amherst Workplace Education Program, has designed pre-supervisory training for about 28 individuals at Smith College. It was created by a committee that included two Smith managers from Building and Dining Services, a member of Human Resources, local union representatives, an instructor, and the BayStateWorks Project Coordinator. Participants were able to learn some of the basics of being a supervisor and practice the new skills, through a second phase practicum. Some enrollees have already been promoted to supervisor while others decided on their own that being a supervisor was not for them.

## P-21

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During fiscal year 2005, P-21 was supported by the Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development using state set-aside funds from the federal Workforce Investment Act. These resources supported staffing of the state committees, publication of detailed youth outcome data, and provided for technical assistance to the local planning teams. Planning grants were awarded to 14 regional multi-stakeholder teams to design local program and service strategies at the local level.

P-21 activities to date include:

- **State Youth Summit.** P-21 convened a successful statewide youth summit in November, 2004, attended by more than 400 stakeholders from state and local education, workforce development, and human services agencies. Designed to help regional teams begin organizing to identify effective local solutions, the summit featured presentations by several youth who talked about their own experiences in getting connected, overcoming family and personal barriers, finishing school, and finding a job. CommCorp produced detailed regional data that showed the current youth outcomes along twenty key indicators including educational attainment, dropout rates, and employment. Outcome data is available at [www.commcorp.org/programs/p21/datayouth.html](http://www.commcorp.org/programs/p21/datayouth.html).
- **State P-21 Steering Committee.** More than 16 agencies are participating in the P-21 process at the state level. The steering committee helped design and plan the successful 2004 Youth Summit. Committee members and CommCorp staff are sharing information and resources across agencies and delivering training on understanding the issues facing transition-aged young people as well as including "youth voice" in planning and operating youth programs.

- **Regional P-21 Planning Teams.** These teams have been fully engaged in action planning, and will define new implementation activities at the regional level, as well as identify specific resource levels and types needed in the regions. CommCorp staff has been coaching and providing technical assistance to these teams.
- **Data Analysis and Training.** CommCorp staff planned and delivered four regional trainings in early 2005 on how to use youth outcome data for strategic planning. These three-hour sessions were successful in helping teams interpret and understand the data that had already been provided, and how to use indicators and outcome benchmarks to identify issues and priorities for local action. Increasingly, the discussion of data and measurement work has centered on the need to develop an integrated data system for reporting, research and evaluation. P-21 partners created a demonstration project to show how to connect and use information from separate data systems.

## ECCLI Round Eight

CommCorp has announced Round Eight of the **Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative** (ECCLI). Letters detailing the process were mailed to all Massachusetts nursing homes in December. Those who respond to the letter by January 20 are eligible to apply. Applicants, who must be Massachusetts licensed skilled nursing facilities not currently receiving ECCLI funding, are required to create career paths by which workers may acquire skills and take on new responsibilities at an increase in pay. Projects must include ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training.

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