

Overview

YouthWorks 2008—Program Summary Statistics

Who participated in YouthWorks 2008?

- The 2008 YouthWorks program gave summer and year-round employment opportunities to 4,260 youth in 25 cities across Massachusetts. YouthWorks provided summer employment to 3,827 low-income youth during the summer of 2008. This number of jobs amounted to 130% of our summer goal, and an increase of about 18 percent in the number of youth served compared with the 2007 summer program.
- Of all youth served during the summer, 89% were in-school, 11% of participants were not in school (3% had already graduated high school but were not enrolled in post-secondary programs; 3% were enrolled in postsecondary programs; 3% were taking GED programs; and 2% had dropped out of high school). The distribution of out-of-school youth has increased slightly compared with the percentage of out-of-school youth in recent program years—reflecting the Commonwealth's increased attention on out-of-school and disconnected youth.
- Of the 3,153 in-school youth participating in the summer, about 79% were ninth, tenth, or eleventh graders. Thirteen percent were enrolled in middle school, and another 8% were high school seniors.
- Slightly more than half of all summer participants were female, and just under one-half were male.
- African-American youth held a relatively higher percentage of YouthWorks summer jobs: 40% of all summer job program participants were African-American, twice the share of the African-American school-aged population within the 25 YouthWorks cities.
- About three-fourths of all youth worked in jobs in three employment categories: 41% of all youth jobs involved direct child care or serving as a summer camp counselor or other youth leader; 12% of summer jobs were in office or administrative support, or in jobs involving customer service; 20% of jobs were involved in maintenance, janitorial, clean-up, lawn care or landscaping.
- In 2008, grantees were allowed to provide supported employment to youth as part of a year-round employment pilot component (January to June 2008). Within the 12 regions that took part in the year-round component, 433 youth were placed in jobs during the year. This number of year-round placements represented 152% of our year-round target. Statewide, about 10 percent of all YouthWorks placements were made as part of the year-round component.

How were YouthWorks funds leveraged and spent?

- The YouthWorks appropriation requires a minimum of 20% match from private sector sources (a goal of \$1,132,065). Overall, communities counted over \$3 million in local match—close to three times the minimum required.
- Eighty percent of all local funds were spent by grantees for student wages, stipends, and FICA; only 15% was used to support adults and supervisors who worked with the youth; five percent of the total was used for local administration and fiscal oversight of the program.

Report on YouthWorks—State-funded Youth Jobs Program

Line Item No. 7002–0012 of the FY2008 budget for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides:

For a youth-at-risk program targeted at reducing juvenile delinquency in high risk areas of the commonwealth; provided that these funds may be expended for the development and implementation of a year-round employment program for at-risk youth; provided further, that \$500,000 of these funds shall be matched by private organizations; provided further that these funds shall be available for expenditure through September 1, 2008 [. . .] \$6,700,000

Background: The YouthWorks appropriation supported summer program activities that took place during the summer of 2008, and a year-round pilot component that took place from January to June 2008. YouthWorks provided funds that communities used to pay wages to low-income youth for employment opportunities—usually in the public or non-profit sector. Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp) administered the program on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD).

Several cities within the Commonwealth have a long history of operating a youth summer jobs program. Some, like the City of Boston, provide significant resources from their own local funds, including the municipal budget. Other summer job programs are funded using federal program resources—such as the Workforce Investment Act Title I Youth Program, managed by the local workforce investment areas. The General Court has appropriated state funds for a summer jobs program since 1995, although some of these appropriations were vetoed or were subject to rescission (e.g., program rescissions took place in 2003, and appropriations were vetoed in 2004 and 2005).

Basic Features of YouthWorks

Eligibility to Apply for Funds: The YouthWorks Program was limited to the twenty-five cities in Massachusetts demonstrating the greatest incidence of juvenile detention and adjudication, cities where low-income youth are especially in need of ensuring access to summer job opportunities. These cities are all part of “workforce investment regions” represented by a local workforce investment board. Applications to design and manage local YouthWorks programs were submitted on a cooperative basis between the targeted city (ies) and the local workforce investment board where those cities are located. This partnership helped encourage local communities to coordinate the summer jobs resources with broader youth strategies. Table One lists the 25 cities in 14 regions that were eligible to apply for YouthWorks resources. (See page 8.) In FY2008, three additional cities became eligible for YouthWorks funding: Framingham, Gardner, and Malden.

Application Process: Communities were invited to submit an application in order to receive an available allocation based on the number of annual DYS placements in the region. Funds for the YouthWorks summer program were allocated to eligible cities using a formula that reflects the relative share of youth aged 14–21 who live below the poverty level, using data from the 2000 Census.

Eligibility of Youth to Participate: In general, participation in this program is limited to youth aged 14–21 whose family income for the most recent six-month period does not exceed the annual equivalent to be eligible to receive a free lunch in the National School Lunch Program. This is equivalent to an annual income of about \$25,000 for a family of four (income thresholds vary by family size). In addition, we established that priority be given to youth who demonstrate at least one additional risk factor beyond family income level. For purposes of this program, such risk factors were defined as:

- A history of juvenile delinquency, or membership in a youth gang;
- Poor academic performance or a school dropout;
- Homelessness;
- Having aged out of foster care, or being close to aging out of foster care;
- Being the child of a single working parent;
- Having disabilities or special needs;
- Lack of fluency in English, or being a foreign immigrant; or
- Being a teen parent.

Program Activities: The primary component of the YouthWorks program is subsidized employment at public or nonprofit agencies, departments and authorities, and at private-sector businesses. We preferred that each participant be employed for at least thirty (30) hours per week over a six-week period during the summer. Participants could be employed in the summer component beginning as early as June 1, 2008, and ending as late as September 1, 2008.

The 2008 appropriation included language enabling grantees to provide supported employment to youth in the months after summer 2007 as part of a year-round program. This pilot year-round program permitted grantees to offer employment from January to June.

Hourly wages were required to be no less than the Massachusetts minimum wage of \$8.00 per hour (the minimum wage in Massachusetts increased from \$7.50 to \$8.00 beginning on January 1, 2008).

Program Staffing: Grant recipients were required to ensure that youth placed in job sites received adequate supervision; localities were permitted to hire and assign staff as worksite supervisors.

Supplemental Services: Grant recipients were also permitted to support certain services to youth in conjunction with subsidized employment:

- Educational services, including GED classes and English-as-a-Second Language, could be offered to any or all youth in combination with subsidized employment. The hours spent receiving such services were counted as part of the 30-hour work week.
- Employment and career counseling, and career awareness activities could be offered, but only as an adjunct to work and training, and could not be provided to any youth as a sole service.

Allowable Expenditures: Not less than 70% of the total funds provided under this program were required to be spent on wages and stipends paid to eligible youth. Up to 30% of the total funds provided under this program could be spent on salaries and related personnel costs of outreach, counseling, instructional and job site supervisory staff; and instructional materials. Each grant recipient was permitted to retain no more than 5% of its grant funds for local management, oversight, reporting and record keeping, and monitoring.

Based on an analysis of program expenditures, 80% of all local funds were spent on youth wages, stipends, and FICA; 15% of funds were expended for local staff.

Table One: List of 2008 YouthWorks Cities and Regions

Workforce Area	Cities
Berkshire Workforce Investment Area	Pittsfield
Boston Workforce Investment Area	Boston
Bristol Workforce Investment Area	Fall River, Taunton
Brockton Workforce Investment Area	Brockton
Central Mass Workforce Investment Area	Worcester
Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Area	Lowell
Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Area	New Bedford
Hampden County Workforce Investment Area	Chicopee, Springfield, Holyoke
Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Area	Lawrence, Haverhill
Metro North Workforce Investment Area	Cambridge, Chelsea, Malden
Metro South/West Investment Area	Framingham
North Central Workforce Investment Area	Fitchburg, Leominster, Gardner
North Shore Workforce Investment Area	Lynn, Salem
South Coastal Workforce Investment Area	Quincy, Randolph, Weymouth

New YouthWorks Features and Initiatives

Expanded Use of Online Work-Based Learning Plan (WBLP): In an effort to increase and better structure learning in summer work experiences, five regions piloted the use of the online Work-Based Learning Plan (WBLP) during the 2008 summer YouthWorks program. The WBLP, an assessment tool used by thousands of students in the state's Connecting Activities program as part of the School to Career initiative, is designed to help structure goal setting and learning on the job. Local staff members participating in the WBLP pilot used an online version of the tool to create learning plans and enter placement information in an online program database that promoted more streamlined data entry efforts (data could be imported to both YouthWorks and School-to-Career data systems).

Pilot participants' reactions to the use of the online WBLP were largely positive. Nearly all participants noted that the WBLP provided a useful means of setting benchmarks and goals and of assessing skill gains on the job. Several participants observed that measuring and assessing skill gain with the WBLP in short-term summer placements was challenging. Similarly, the online aspect was difficult for summer staff working in outdoor locations without computer access (e.g., parks, beaches). However, all participants agreed that an assessment tool is critical to helping youth and employers explicitly understand and document employability skills gains—both for gains in 'soft skills' like punctuality and teamwork, as well as for gains in job-specific skills.

YouthWorks 2008 Year-Round Component: Based on the successful implementation of a small year-round program that served 166 youth from seven regions in the fall of 2007, YouthWorks initiated a larger scale year-round pilot program in FY2008 involving 12 regions. Cities with eligible YouthWorks participants were invited to apply for year-round funding; regions targeted 285 youth to participate in the year-round program. The target number for the year-round 2008 component was based on commitments made by grantees in the application process, rather than on a state-level formula. All year-round participants had the same eligibility requirements as summer YouthWorks participants. In total, regions exceeded their year-round target by over 50%: 433 youth took part in the year-round employment program.

Feedback from participating program staff indicated that the longer year-round format allowed regions to focus on developing program components such as mentoring and literacy to better serve the most marginalized, 'hard to employ' youth. In addition, many staff believed that subsidized year-round employment is invaluable for specific cohorts of youth—especially for older youth who need more support in establishing a resume and an employment track record.

Table Two: 2008 Summer YouthWorks Program Results

LWIA	Eligible Cities	Total Available Funds	Goal: Number of Youth Jobs	Actual Number of Youth Served	Youth Served as % of Goal
Berkshire	Pittsfield	\$73,528	38	39	103%
Boston	Boston	\$2,150,927	1,120	1,566	140%
Bristol	Fall River, Taunton	\$261,026	136	149	110%
Brockton	Brockton	\$188,548	98	210	214%
Central Massachusetts	Worcester	\$533,081	278	387	139%
Hampden County	Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee	\$767,322	400	441	110%
Lowell	Lowell	\$260,501	136	158	116%
Lower Merrimack	Lawrence, Haverhill	\$336,655	175	197	113%
Metro North	Cambridge, Chelsea, Malden	\$288,862	150	280	187%
Metro South/West	Framingham	\$65,650	34	30	88%
New Bedford	New Bedford	\$238,442	124	98	79%
North Central	Leominster, Fitchburg, Gardner	\$159,137	83	95	114%
North Shore	Lynn, Salem	\$238,442	124	124	100%
South Coastal	Quincy, Randolph, Weymouth	\$98,213	51	53	104%
Statewide Totals:		\$5,660,334	2,947	3,827	130%

Results of the 2008 YouthWorks Program

Table Two presents summary statewide information on the distribution of funds and on summer program participation by youth. (See page 9.) Statewide, about 90 percent of all YouthWorks placements started and ended during the summer months. The Statewide Profile in the Appendix includes more specific data on the demographic background and characteristics of the YouthWorks population.

All participant data presented in the state and local profiles represent information reported by local communities through Commonwealth Corporation's YouthWorks database. Each analytical table includes all data reported for participants in the region. Not all information was reported for every youth participant.

Table Three summarizes information concerning supported employment during the year-round component. We permitted grantees to provide employment from January to June 2008. Twelve regions participated in the pilot year-round program and served 433 youth. Approximately 10 percent of 2008 YouthWorks participants took part in year-round placements.

Table Three: 2008 YouthWorks Year-Round Program Results

LWIA	Eligible Cities	Total Available Funds	Goal: Number of Youth Jobs	Actual Number of Youth Jobs	Youth Served as % of Goal
Berkshire	Pittsfield	\$35,000	6	5	83%
Boston	Boston	\$100,000	47	105	223%
Bristol	Fall River, Taunton	\$50,000	23	50	217%
Brockton	Brockton	\$50,000	35	18	51%
Hampden County	Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee	\$75,000	32	58	181%
Lowell	Lowell	\$50,000	28	28	100%
Lower Merrimack	Lawrence, Haverhill	\$54,655	16	20	125%
Metro North	Cambridge, Chelsea, Malden	\$50,000	10	29	290%
New Bedford	New Bedford	\$50,000	28	35	125%
North Central	Leominster, Fitchburg, Gardner	\$50,000	20	20	100%
North Shore	Lynn, Salem	\$50,000	20	31	155%
Worcester	Worcester	\$75,000	20	34	170%
Totals:		\$689,665	285	433	152%