The United States Conference of Mayors
Workforce Development Council

“America’s young people face record unemployment, and we need to do everything we can to make sure they’ve got the opportunity to learn the skills and a work ethic that come with a job. It’s important for their future, and for America.”
–President Obama.

NATIONWIDE REPRESENTATION
48 LOCAL AREAS REPRESENTED

Boston and Summer Jobs
A HUGE SUCCESS STORY

Boston has long been known for running one of the most successful Summer Youth Employment Programs in the country. According to former Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, in addressing business leaders, “Boston offers the most summer jobs per capita of any major city in America.” In Boston, in addition to the role of the Mayor, three sectors play a large part.

Most important is the role of the mayor. Former Boston Mayor Tom Menino was chief recruiter for obtaining paid internships for young people. Starting in January, the Mayor began making speeches to every business audience he encountered encouraging them to hire Boston youth and stressed that the City would send employers prepared candidates. Without having well-prepared youth to fill the jobs, marketing the program to the private sector can produce disappointing results and businesses only will participate in this type of program once if they don’t have a good experience.

Private philanthropy plays a significant role in the Employment Program. Several millions of dollars for wages go to community-based organizations to hire teens who then supply additional workers for those agencies to expand their services during the summer. This effort is closely coordinated with the city’s program. The John Hancock program which supports 674 youth jobs developed a job readiness skills workshop given every Friday during the summer. In addition, the Youth Violence Prevention collaborative, led by State Street Foundation, has organized over a dozen private foundations to work with youth who live in neighborhoods experiencing extreme street violence.

The Boston Private Industry Council works throughout the school year in public high schools to prepare students to compete for a high quality private sector internship. Their kick off to the

About The US Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council

You are reading a publication of the US Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council (WDC). The organization’s members—including the nation’s largest cities—manage federally funded employment and training programs and work closely with mayors and other local elected officials. The activities of WDC members are focused on meeting the human resource needs of American businesses and improving the economic status of jobseekers and their families.

The purpose of this publication and subsequent issues is to demonstrate the high value the nation’s workforce system delivers to millions of Americans every year.

For more information on the WDC or to become a member, please contact Kathy Wiggins at kwiggins@usmayors.org
Finally is the role of government. In February every year, Boston opens its Hope Line and youth from 15 to 17 can call or go on line to register for a summer job. The City budgets $4 million to support youth wages each summer and plays the largest role, placing over 3000 youth in local non-profit organizations. Recently the State of Massachusetts has budgeted for youth wages which has meant an additional $2 Million in funding for Boston. For court and gang involved teens and young adults with safety issues, Boston’s Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) runs an intensive 7-week program where youth work on teams on a variety of community service projects, and work to change their behavior and plan for a productive and peaceful future.

Putting 10,000 youth to work takes the collaboration of many adults. The goal is meaningful employment defined as a paid work experience with quality supervision, a well-designed learning plan, and connections to supportive services, particularly positive youth development and mentoring activities. These are the ingredients which make a huge difference in the life of young people, especially those who have few or no connections to the world of work. This is the key to success in Boston.

The Mayor’s SummerWorks Program

A SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

In 2011, federal funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for a summer jobs program for youth, ages 16-24, disappeared. Newly elected Mayor Greg Fischer decided Louisville’s philanthropic and business communities would make the program work despite no funding and a high youth unemployment rate, which was near the national high of 25 percent.

Through his efforts and financial support from individuals, business leaders, foundations and local government, he created The Mayor’s SummerWorks Program, and 200 young people were placed in jobs that summer. The program has grown in breadth and depth since 2011.

Over the past three years, the Mayor’s SummerWorks Program has fostered public-private partnerships that have helped prepare, place and mentor more than 1,000 low-income youth for summer employment while helping more than 2,000 young adults find summer jobs. Mayor Fischer has set the 2014 goal to employ 2,000 youth.

In that same time, the model has changed completely – from one focused on raising private dollars to pay the wages of all participants to one focused primarily on placing young people in private-sector jobs while using philanthropic dollars to properly prepare low-income youth to compete for and win those job opportunities.

For the past two years, the Mayor has secured a key community leader – a SummerWorks Champion – who plays a vital role in urging employers and donors to come on board with the program. The Champion has encouraged many great companies and countless caring individuals to offer jobs and funding.

Youth have opportunities for “dream jobs” that prepare them for the real world of work. During the seven-week program, they gain skills ranging from retailing, banking and manufacturing to information technology and health care at some of Louisville’s premier employers such as Ford, GE, Hosparus, PNC, Thorntons, Norton Healthcare and Churchill Downs.

In cities all over the country, when the huge influx of ARRA funding to support Summer Jobs came to an end, youth job-creation efforts almost completely vanished, but our business community is proving Louisville can do more than wait for federal rescue. Together, Mayor Fischer, employers and other financial supporters are proving that Louisville can and will nurture its young people to lifelong success through funding and hiring Mayor’s SummerWorks participants. By investing in Louisville’s most precious resources, we are creating our talent pipeline for the future.

BOSTON PROGRAM FUNDING SOURCES

| CITY | 31% |
| FOUNDATIONS | 21% |
| STATE | 19% |
| PRIVATE SECTOR | 29% |

These youth work alongside adult role models and mentors. They learn skills they can use throughout their adult lives, and they see a connection between success in school and success in the workforce. For many youth, it is their first opportunity to see a clear pathway from school to employment and a bright future in this community.

The Mayor’s SummerWorks Program has three goals:

• Increase the number of companies hiring program participants
• Prepare, place and coach low-income youth to be successful at these jobs
• Create a talent pipeline for employers who want prepared, diverse, hard-working young employees

BOSTON PROGRAM FUNDING SOURCES

Investing in Youth

The workforce system has long emphasized the importance of a first job for youth. There is an indisputable value to early preparation and exposure to quality work experience for all young people, but especially for youth who live in poverty. We may hold various philosophies on the best means to achieve quality work experience for teens, but no one disputes the need and value of work experience at an early age! Good work experience is necessary to build workplace skills, supplement academic education, and provide experiential learning for essential skills (punctuality, work ethic, team work, problem-solving skills, customer service) prized by U.S. employers. The members of the WDC strongly support greater federal investment in youth work experience. Both public and private resources and participation are needed to provide an essential workplace foundation for the future workforce.