

## **Overview of the Bridging the Opportunity Gap Programs**

The Bridging the Opportunity Gap initiative provides a variety of workforce development, training, education (HiSET and tutoring), arts and culture and mentoring programming to youth receiving services through DYS, with a special focus on those returning to their home communities following residential treatment. BOG programs offer comprehensive employability services including career readiness, vocational, and leadership and youth development training, work force certifications and subsidized employment experience.

The goals for the Bridging the Opportunity Gap initiative includes:

- Preparing clients for entry into the workforce through career readiness services;
- Providing participants with credentials, certificates, and training in specific vocational, entrepreneurial, and employability skills;
- Identifying, placing, and overseeing subsidized work-based learning opportunities for youth that allow them to apply skills in work settings.
- Direct services that support pre-HiSET, customized tutoring directed at improving literacy skills, and programming that enables youth to obtain their HiSET;
- Programming for a range of out of school time experiences such as mentoring, community service learning, leadership and advocacy training, arts and cultural opportunities; and
- Work-based learning opportunities including internships and entrepreneurship training

## **2015/2016 DYS Bridging the Opportunity Gap Grant Program Summaries**

**Grantee:** Artistic Noise

**Title of Program:** Art, Entrepreneurship and Curatorial Program

**Type of Program:** Arts and Culture

**Location:** Boston

**Project Contact and Organization:** Vanessa Ruiz • Executive Director • Artistic Noise •  
[vanessa.ruiz@artisticnoise.org](mailto:vanessa.ruiz@artisticnoise.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 5

**Program Description:** Artistic Noise's Art, Entrepreneurship and Curatorial Program provides DYS participants the opportunity to work collaboratively with their peers to create works of art; curate art shows; and market and sell original artwork and products. Group activities provide opportunities for participants to gain self-confidence as they explore and define themselves in meaningful ways.

### **Grant Partners**

DYS Metro Region • Artistic Noise

**Grantee:** Berkshire Community Action Council (BCAC)

**Title of Program:** Reconnect Vocational Program

**Type of Program:** Work Based Learning

**Location:** Pittsfield

**Project Contact and Organization:** Bryan House • Program Manager • Reconnect Center • [Bhouse@bcacinc.org](mailto:Bhouse@bcacinc.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 5

**Program Description:** This project creates opportunities for effective career readiness, certification training, and subsidized work placements for youth currently receiving services in DYS. All students access the BOG Career Readiness Curriculum and develop a career portfolio and have the opportunity to gain ServSafe and Career Safe certification and subsidized employment.

**Certifications Offered:** ServSafe and Career Safe

#### **Grant Partners**

• DYS Western Region • Berkshire Community Action Council • Reconnect Center

**Grantee:** Blue Hills Regional Technical School

**Title of Program:** BOG Vocational Program

**Type of Program:** Vocational Project

**Location:** Canton

**Project Contact and Organization:** Dwight Seaman • Program Manager • Blue Hills Regional Technical School • [dseaman@bluehills.org](mailto:dseaman@bluehills.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 10

**Program Description:** The BOG Vocational program provides an exploratory auto-motive training for a maximum of 10 students. The various stages of the vocational training include instruction, assessment and ongoing feedback in the areas of automotive electrical, mechanical, welding and body work. Youth will receive certifications in AC Handlers and 6HHHHHH all of which are requirements in the collision industry.

**Certifications Offered:** AC Handler and 6HHHHHH certification

**Grant Partners**

• DYS Quincy and Brockton District Office • Blue Hills Regional Technical School

**Grantee:** Bristol Workforce Investment Board (BWIB)

**Title of Program:** Project Success

**Type of Program:** Work Based Learning

**Location:** Taunton/Fall River

**Project Contact and Organization:** Christopher Parayno • Youth Systems Coordinator • BWIB • [cparayno@bristolwib.org](mailto:cparayno@bristolwib.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 6

**Program Description:** Project Success youth will receive a minimum of 10 hours of orientation training utilizing the BOG Empower Your Future Orientation Curriculum. After the initial career readiness orientation, participants will be placed for a minimum of 48 hours in a subsidized work placement that matches their career interest as closely as possible. While youth participate in subsidized employment they will receive a minimum of 10 bi-weekly or weekly workforce readiness sessions to complete a career portfolio. Grantee partners also provide assistance with job placement and referrals to education partners for HiSET, ABE or post-secondary education.

#### **Grant Partners**

• DYS Taunton and Fall River District Offices • Bristol Workforce Investment Board • BCTC • Career Centers of Bristol County • SER Jobs

**Grantee:** Community Action

**Title of Program:** Community Action Youth Programs

**Type of Program:** Work Based Learning

**Location:** Hampshire/Franklin/North Quabbin

**Project Contact and Organization:** Jennifer Davis-Bulko • Assistant Director • Community Action •  
jdavisbulko@communityaction.us

**Number of Youth Participants:** 7

**Program Description:** Community Action will provide Hampshire County, Franklin County, and North Quabbin youth involved in the DYS to gain essential skills for finding and retaining employment. By engaging in 40 hours of orientation, career readiness and youth development training and participating in 100 hours of subsidized employment, participating youth will build positive behaviors and learn how to function productively in the workplace and the community.

**Grant Partners**

• DYS Western Region • Community Action

**Grantee:** Greater New Life Christian Center of Springfield

**Title of Program:** Career Skills Institute (CSI)

**Type of Program:** Vocational

**Location:** Springfield

**Project Contact and Organization:** Rev. Morris Stimage-Norwood • GNLCC Executive Director • [gnlcc@localnet.com](mailto:gnlcc@localnet.com)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 7

**Program Description:** Youth in this program receive vocational training and pre-employment training in the Career Skills Institute (CSI) at Greater New Life Christian Center. Youth learn key vocational skills such as carpentry, construction, painting, and flooring and gain a greater awareness of employment opportunities available to them. Participants will develop a career portfolio and receive OSHA 10 certification.

**Certifications Offered:** CPR/First Aid and OSHA 10

**Grant Partners**

• DYS Springfield District Office • Greater New Life Christian Center

**Grantee:** L.U.K. Crisis Center, Inc.

**Title of Program:** Youth Employment and Leadership Program

**Type of Program:** Work Based Learning

**Location:** Fitchburg

**Project Contact and Organization:** Maurie Bergeron • Director of TIL Services • LUK •  
[MBergeron@LUK.org](mailto:MBergeron@LUK.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 10

**Program Description:** The LUK program provides career readiness training and subsidized work experience to youth. Youth participate in employer field trips, job shadowing and develop a career portfolio.

**Certifications Offered:** CPR/First Aid

#### **Grant Partners**

- DYS Central Region • LUK Crisis Center, Inc.



**Grantee:** Medicine Wheel Productions

**Title of Program:** Public Art Internship

**Type of Program:** Arts and Cultural

Location: Greater Boston Area

**Project Contact and Organization:** Noel McKenna • Program Coordinator • Medicine Wheel Productions • [nmckenna@mwproductions.org](mailto:nmckenna@mwproductions.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 8

**Program Description:** The Medicine Wheel project targets DYS clients in the Boston area to work as paid interns in creating and maintaining public art installations. Participants learn a variety of art mediums in addition to developing skills in verbal communication and writing. Youth gain skills in leadership, facilitation of groups and performance art.

#### **Grant Partners**

- DYS Metro Region • Medicine Wheel Productions

**Grantee:** Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board/Valley Works Career Center (VWCC)

**Title of Program:** Valley Works BOG

**Type of Program:** Work-based Learning

**Location:** Lawrence

**Project Contact and Organization:** Arthur Chilingirian • Executive Director • Valley Works Career Center • [achilingirian@detma.org](mailto:achilingirian@detma.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 20

**Project Description:** Valley Works Career Center provides a high quality career readiness and employment-related training service. Youth are trained to identify their skills, present their skills to potential employers, and utilize them in the workplace. Youth will be matched with employers providing meaningful work experience in an occupational field of interest to the youth.

**Grant Partners**

• DYS Northeast Region • Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) • Valley Works Career Center

**Grantee:** More Than Words

**Title of Program:** Social Enterprise Training Program

**Type of Program:** Work Based Learning

**Location:** Boston

**Project Contact and Organization:** Jodi Rosenbaum • Executive Director • More than Words • [jodi@mtwyouth.org](mailto:jodi@mtwyouth.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 7

**Program Description:** Youth participate in the More than Words' social enterprise training program in an online and retail book business, cafe and community space. Youth facilitate peer-led trainings and weekly team meetings and are engaged in all aspects of running a business. Towards the end of the training period, youth receive career counseling and engage in career planning activities as well as develop a career portfolio.

**Grant Partners**

• DYS Metro Region • More Than Words

**Grantee:** NFI Massachusetts, Inc.

**Title of Program:** NFI/DYS Community Based HiSET Program

**Type of Program:** HiSET

**Location:** Lawrence

**Project Contact and Organization:** Mike Gillert • Northeast Region Project Director • NFI Massachusetts, Inc. • [mikegillert@nafi.com](mailto:mikegillert@nafi.com)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 40 - 50

**Program Description:** NFI provides Pre-HiSET and HiSET classes, individualized tutoring services and post-secondary education to 40-50 youth in the Lawrence and Lynn DHS district offices. Of these participants, 20-25 are expected to obtain a HiSET and/or participate in postsecondary education and training.

**Grant Partners**

• DHS Northeast Region • NFI Massachusetts Inc.

**Grantee:** NFI Massachusetts, Inc.

**Title of Program:** NFI/DYS Work Based Learning Program

**Type of Program:** Work Based Learning

**Location:** Lynn

**Project Contact and Organization** Mike Gillert • Northeast Region Project Director • NFI Massachusetts, Inc. • [mikegillert@nafi.com](mailto:mikegillert@nafi.com)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 6

**Program Description:** NFI will provide career readiness and youth development training and subsidized employment in Lynn. The ultimate goal of this program is to prepare youth to successfully enter the workforce through targeting both the hard and soft skills necessary to obtain and retain gainful employment.

**Grant Partners**

• DYS Northeast Region • NFI Massachusetts Inc.

**Grantee:** Western Massachusetts Training Consortium (WMTC)

**Title of Program:** Work Experience

**Type of Program:** Work based Learning

**Location:** Holyoke/Springfield

**Project Contact and Organization:** Shane Brooks • Program Manager • WMTC

[sbrooks@wmtcinfo.org](mailto:sbrooks@wmtcinfo.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 20

**Program Description:** WMTC provides Career Exploration for young adults to explore career possibilities that link personal aspirations to real world job experiences. The program will offer career readiness training and subsidized employment to youth in Holyoke and Springfield. Group meetings will allow time for both career-readiness training and sharing of learning experiences in the workplace. Additionally, youth will have the opportunity to tour local colleges, and will be supported in pursuing their individual goals by multiple facilitators. Youth interested in the auto industry will have the opportunity to participate in general automotive training and earn a certificate of completion.

**Certifications:** Auto training

#### **Grant Partners**

- DYS Western Region • Western Massachusetts Training Consortium

**Grantee:** Worcester Youth Center (WYC)

**Title of Program:** Examining Options

**Type of Program:** Work Based Learning

**Location:** Worcester

**Project Contact and Organization:** Sam Martin • Executive Director • Worcester Youth Center • [smartin@worcesteryouthcenter.org](mailto:smartin@worcesteryouthcenter.org)

**Number of Youth Participants:** 12

**Program Description:** The Worcester Youth Center (WYC) will serve youth in Subsidized Work Placement experiences that will meet all of the requirements for career readiness, and work experience and while providing a variety of opportunities for youth to explore different settings in agencies like a food bank, nature center, community garden, library and museum.

**Grant Partners**

• DYS Central Region • Worcester Youth Center • Press Pass TV • Worcester Art Museum