



YouthWorks FAQ

Frequently-Asked-Questions for **Employers**



The Massachusetts youth workforce development system connects work-ready 14 to 21-year olds to summer and year-round employment opportunities. For employers, the programs offer the chance to address current business needs and help lay the groundwork for tomorrow's workforce. The FAQ below may help you in your decision to hire a youth, take part in the state-funded youth jobs program called YouthWorks, or sponsor youth in jobs through donations.

WHAT IS YOUTHWORKS?

YouthWorks is a state-funded youth employment program that provides funds to pay for wages to eligible youth aged 14-21 residing in 31 targeted cities and towns. The mission of the program is to support youth and young adults in the development of marketable skills needed in a competitive economy. Employment placements are made in a wide range of positions in public, private and nonprofit sectors.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM?

Several youth employment programs are in operation across the state. You can take part in a youth employment program in three main ways:

- » Hire a youth
- » Apply to take on and supervise a youth who is paid through a state, federal, or privately funded program
- » Donate funds to cover the costs of paying youths placed in jobs

WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN THE PROCESS TO HIRE YOUTH IN YOUTHWORKS?

Workforce Development Board (WDB) staff or their youth-serving partners provide employers with the support and guidance needed to take part in YouthWorks. All WDBs and/or their partners develop contract agreements that typically spell out the roles and responsibilities of the employer and the WDB or partner. The agreement stipulates the length of the program; the number of hours youth are permitted to work; fair labor practices; protocols for administrative and operational procedures such as timekeeping and payroll, safety, site visits by program staff; and procedures for youth supervision and use of a learning plan.

The **first step** is to assess your needs and develop a brief job description that the WDB or partnering organization can use to help match your employment opportunity with a young person with suitable abilities and interests. WDBs and partnering organizations are experienced in connecting young people with employers and will be able to give you tips for writing an effective job description. The job description should outline the responsibilities and duties required in the position including hours, location, type of work (e.g., indoors/outdoors, clerical, research, maintenance, outreach, etc.).

IS THERE A DEADLINE?

The YouthWorks Summer job program usually begins the week after the July 4th and ends the last week in August. While, placements are usually made in April through June, you can apply for the program at any time.

CAN I INTERVIEW YOUTH APPLICANTS?

Employer input in the candidate-job matching process—including interviewing—is an effective way to help ensure a successful placement. Many areas encourage employers to take part in the matching process by interviewing and selecting candidates.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT WORK PERMITS, WAGES, AND YOUTH LABOR LAWS?

Young people aged 14 to 17 must have a work permit. They typically obtain work permits through their schools or school superintendent's office. The employer must sign the work permit and keep it on file while the young person is working. In many cases, the Workforce Development Board (WDB) or the partnering organization is the employer of record; in this case, the permit is signed by the WDB/partner and kept in their respective files.

All youth participants in employment programs must be paid at least the state's minimum wage. Child labor laws pertain to young people ages 14 to 17. The laws stipulate the number of hours that youth can work (during school months and during the summer) and the types of activities that youth cannot undertake on the job. In short, young people in this age range cannot drive vehicles or operate most machinery including cooking equipment associated with kitchen work (although there are some exceptions).

Staff at Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and partnering organizations are familiar with the child labor laws and can provide guidance about how they apply in all employment situations. A copy of the child labor laws is provided to all employers who take part in the program. While youth hours are limited by state and federal wage and hour laws, young people can work at least 40 hours a week when school is not in session.

The chart below summarizes the legal work hours for teenagers 14-17 in Massachusetts.

	14-15 year olds	16-17 year olds
Work hours	Only between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. during the school year	Only between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. (on nights preceding a regularly scheduled school day) – if the establishment stops serving clients or customers at 10:00 p.m., the minor may be employed until 10:15 p.m.
	Not during school hours	Only between 6 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. (on nights not preceding a regularly scheduled school day).
	Only between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. during the summer (from July 1 through Labor Day)	Exception for restaurants and racetracks: only between 6 a.m. and 12:00 midnight (on nights not preceding a regularly scheduled school day).
Maximum hours when school in session.	18 hours a week	48 hours a week
	3 hours a day on school days	9 hours a day
	8 hours a day Saturday, Sunday, holidays	
	6 days a week	6 days a week
Maximum hours when school not in session.	40 hours a week	48 hours a week
	8 hours a day	9 hours a day
	6 days a week	6 days a week

WHAT TYPES OF TASKS CAN YOUTH PERFORM ON THE JOB?

Youth can take part in a wide variety of tasks on the job. They provide administrative and research supports; do landscaping and maintenance; work in retail and service positions; and work with children and elders. They work in a range of industries including business, health care, IT, media and communication, law, government and public service, education and many others. Many businesses and organizations find that young people are enthusiastic fast learners who enjoy being given new responsibilities. Often, the longer they stay the more valuable they become as they get more familiar and invested in your work.

WHAT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYERS THAT HIRE YOUTH?

Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and their partners are committed to preparing young people for the world of work. They provide young people with work-readiness workshops including health and safety on the job. They coach youth in the steps involved in getting a placement that matches their future career goals and interests. They also help youth assess their progress on the job—often in collaboration with worksite supervisors. Workforce staff members assist young people in completing their paper work—e.g., get work permits and understand the steps involved in getting paid. Finally, youth coordinators and case managers act as intermediaries for employers and are able to coach young people on the job.

HOW ARE YOUTH PREPARED FOR EMPLOYMENT?

Youth who take part in youth employment programs like YouthWorks will come to the job ready to work. Pre-employment training includes a combination of work readiness, life skills, and career exploration skills geared to help young people learn transferable skills that can help them in any job. Work-readiness skills and professionalism are the focus of the employability curriculum all participants take part in—Signal Success. Program staff members help young people understand how professional behaviors and a positive interactive style will help them get ahead.

In addition to pre-employment training, all programs help young people develop a learning plan and assess progress on the job. This may be done with a tool called the MA Work-Based Learning Plan designed to structure the job responsibilities, to help organize conversations about how the job is going, and to assess performance with career skills such as time management, customer service, or project management.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF EMPLOYERS THAT HIRE YOUTH?

All young people need to work in safe environments under the oversight of adults who care about their well-being and are willing to offer opportunities for growth. While it does take an investment of time to give young people the kind of structure needed to meet high expectations for quality work, the payoff can be both personally rewarding and profitable for your business or organization.

CAN I HIRE YOUTH AFTER THE PROGRAM IS OVER?

Hiring youth after the program is usually an option. Young people are often looking for job opportunities either after school or as they start to pursue post-secondary education and training.

HOW CAN I GET STARTED?

You can begin the hiring process by getting in touch with the Youth Programs contact person at your regional Workforce Development Board. You can find contact info at the end of this FAQ, or visit <http://commcorp.org/programs/youthworks/>.



YOUTHWORKS CONTACT LIST

Region	YouthWorks Cities & Towns	Primary Contact Info	Title
Berkshire	Pittsfield	Kelly Groves 413-499-2220 x 145 kgroves@berkshireworks.org	Youth Counselor
Boston	Boston	Midori Morikawa 617-918-5233 midori.morikawa@boston.gov	Deputy Director of Workforce and Policy Development
Bristol	Fall River, Taunton	Joana Mateus 508-675-1165 x 108 jmateus@bristoljobs.org	Youth Systems Coordinator
Brockton	Brockton	Krystel Love 508-584-3234 klove@bawib.org	Director of Youth Services
Cape	Barnstable	Martha Burzycki 508-862-6139 mburzycki@jteccorp.com	Career Opportunities/JTEC
Central	Worcester	Jeffrey Turgeon 508-799-1509 TurgeonJ@ci.worcester.ma.us	Executive Director
Franklin Hampshire	Northampton	Jim Parcels 413-774-3183 x 306 jimparcells@fhcareers.org	Franklin Hampshire Career Center
Lowell	Lowell	Bridget Quinn 978-805-4747 Bridget.Quinn@cclowell.org	Career Center Manager
New Bedford	New Bedford	Tanya Alves 508-979-1700 x 102 3talves@newbedfordcc.org	Program Coordinator, New Directions
Hampden	Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, West Springfield	Kathryn Kirby 413-755-1359 kkirby@rebhc.org	Manager of Youth Employment and Workforce Programs
Merrimack	Lawrence, Haverhill	Cristy Gomez 978-722-7086 cchgomez@mvwib.org	Youth Workforce Program Manager
Metro North	Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Revere, Somerville	Meelynn Wong 617-871-1115 mwong@mnreb.org	Associate Director
Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce (formerly Metro South West)	Framingham	Kelley French 508-281-6910 x4 kfrench@pswinc.org	Director – Young Adult Employment Initiative

Region	YouthWorks Cities & Towns	Primary Contact Info	Title
North Central	Fitchburg, Leominster	Mary Chase 978- 534- 1481 x 152 MChase@ccncm.com	President, Employment Links, Inc.
North Shore	Lynn, Salem, Peabody	Katie Crowder 978-741-3805 katie@northshorewib.com	Coordinator of Workforce Initiatives
South Coastal	Plymouth, Quincy, Weymouth	Lynn Courtney 617-934-4854 lcourtney@sswib.org	Youth Director