

YouthWorks FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions for **Employers**



YouthWorks Achievements

State-wide presence	Over 5,000 youth and young adults ages 14-21 served across all 16 regions of Massachusetts
Employer-focused	Learning opportunities for in-demand industries including IT, Manufacturing and Healthcare
Comprehensive career readiness training	Participants gain 15-25 hours of career readiness training through tiered learning models
Expansive Partnerships	Over 2,800 partnerships with private sector businesses, non-profits, and community-based organizations
Volunteers Network	Over 150 professionals volunteered their time for Career Chats with youth and young adults

The Massachusetts youth workforce development system connects young people, ages 14-21 years old, to summer and year-round employment opportunities. **However, in summer 2022, the age range will change to 14-25.** The program offers employers the chance to address current business needs and help lay the groundwork for tomorrow’s workforce. If you would like to hire a youth, participate in the state-funded youth jobs program YouthWorks, or sponsor a youth in employment through donations, the FAQs below may help you.

WHAT IS YOUTHWORKS?

YouthWorks is a state-funded youth employment program that helps teens and young adults gain the skills and experience needed to find and keep jobs. From first jobs to leadership development, from skills training to career exploration, YouthWorks provides Massachusetts teens and young adults with a chance to work, learn and thrive. YouthWorks helps young people get the skills and experience needed to enter the workforce and to begin to design a path toward sustained success. For the past two decades, income-

eligible teens and young adults ages 14 to 21, from over 30 cities across Massachusetts, have taken part in one of the few state-funded youth employment programs in the country. Participants of these programs are young adults whose family income does not exceed the annual equivalent of 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Summer 2020 was the first full-scale implementation of YouthWorks new three-tiered developmental model focused on meeting the needs of participants in terms of age, stage, and career path. When the realities and adversities of the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in the spring, the program faced an immediate need to fully redesign the delivery model to prioritize safety alongside program quality. With input from regional and local stakeholders, Commonwealth Corporation developed YouthWorksStrong, a comprehensive virtual career development program aligned to YouthWork's age, stage, and path model. Over 30 communities in Massachusetts participate in this program, which aims to build essential skills, promote career awareness, and foster positive connections with peers and professionals.

By operating largely virtually during the early stages of COVID-19, COVID-19 created a foundation for future programming that will provide both virtual and in-person options for summer 2021. Although created in response to health and safety concerns, this summer's course change gave the program an unprecedented opportunity to innovate, improve and enhance our YouthWorks model.

YouthWorks tiered developmental model and core programmatic goals are aligned with virtual and hybrid offerings that combine the strength of statewide offerings with the flexibility to embed local programming and placement options.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM?

Hire youth for an in-person, virtual or hybrid work experience

- Apply to take on and supervise youth who are paid through a state, federal, or privately funded program
- Donate funds to cover the costs of paying youth placed in jobs
- Volunteer for a Career Chat

WHAT ARE CAREER CHATS?

Career Chats are 60-minute virtual opportunities for professionals to share their career pathways journeys with young people in the YouthWorks program via Zoom.

For more information on Career Chats, please contact Kathryn Kirby, Manager of Employer & Community Engagement Manager, Commonwealth Corporation, via email at kkirby@commcorp.org.

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

Employers participating in YouthWorks receive support and guidance from the MassHire Workforce Investment Board or MassHire Career Center staff. Workforce Investment Boards and their partners develop contract agreements outlining the roles and responsibilities of employers and Workforce Boards.

The agreement specifies the duration of the program, the number of hours youth are permitted to work, fair labor practices, and 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 Workforce Boards or partner organization can use to help match your employment opportunity with a young person with

suitable abilities and interests. Workforce Boards 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 duties and responsibilities of the position, including the hours, location, and type of work (e.g., indoors/outdoors, research, maintenance, outreach, etc.).

IS THERE A DEADLINE?

The YouthWorks Summer Program usually begins the week after the July 4th holiday and ends the last week in August. Applications are usually available between March and April. The YouthWorks Year-Round Program runs from September to June.

Applications for the summer and Year-Round Program are available by contacting your city or town’s YouthWorks Administration by placements are usually made in April through June, you can apply for the program anytime.

*See table on page 6 for direct contacts by regions.

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 Board or the partnering organization is the employer of record. In this case, the permit is signed by the Workforce Board/ partner and kept in their respective files.

All youth participants in the employment programs must be paid at least the state’s minimum wage. Child labor laws pertain to young people ages 14 to 17. Laws restrict youth’s hours of work (during school months and in the summer) and the types of work they can do. Young people in this age bracket cannot drive a vehicle or operate the majority of machines, including kitchen equipment (although there are some exceptions).

Staff at Workforce Boards (WIBs) and partnering organizations are familiar with the child labor laws and can guide 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 p.m., the minor may work until 10:15 p.m.

	Not during schools' 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 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 is 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, even though we are working in a virtual space. They provide administrative and research supports; youth can do landscaping and maintenance; work in retail and service positions as long as the employer is following Massachusetts COVID-19 guidelines. 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?

MassHire Workforce Board, MassHire Career Centers, 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. Furthermore, they assist youth in assessing their progress on the job, often in collaboration with supervisors. Workforce staff members assist young people in completing their paperwork—e.g., work permits and understand the steps involved in getting paid. In addition, youth coordinators and case managers can act as intermediaries for employers and coach young people through the job placement process.

For more information on the YouthWorks program, please contact:

Tasia Cerezo, EdD
 Director, Youth Employment, Curriculum and Training
 Commonwealth Corporation
 Direct: 617.717.6934
 Email: tcerezo@commcorp.org

Or the primary contact for your local program.

Regions (Priority Cities)	YouthWorks Cities & Town	Primary Contact
Berkshire	Pittsfield	Kelly Groves-Skrocki Youth Counselor MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board Phone: 413-499-2220 x 145 Email: kgroves@berkshireworks.org
Boston	Boston	Larry Smith Deputy Director of Workforce and Policy Development City of Boston Phone: 617-918-5262 Email: larry.r.smith@boston.gov
Bristol	Fall River, Taunton	Nick Church Youth Systems Coordinator MassHire Bristol Workforce Board Phone: 508-675-1165 x 108 Email: nchurch@masshirebristol.org
Cape & Islands	Barnstable	Martha Burzycki Youth Career Consultant Job Training & Employment Program (JTEC) Phone: 508-862-6139 Email: mburzycki@masshire-capeandislands.com

Central	Worcester	Jeffrey Turgeon Executive Director MassHire Central Workforce Board Phone: 508-799-1509 Email: TurgeonJ@ci.worcester.ma.us
Franklin-Hampshire	Northampton, Ware	Anitra Ford Youth Programs and Special Projects Coordinator MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center Phone: 413-774-3183 x 306 Email: anitraford@masshirefhcareers.org
Greater Brockton	Brockton	David Vincent Director of Youth Services MassHire Greater Brockton Career Center Phone: 508-513-3400 Email: dvincent@masshiregbwb.org
Greater Lowell	Lowell	Heather Donovan Career Center Manager MassHire Greater Lowell Career Center Phone: 978-805-4747 Email: heather.Donovan@masshirelowellcc.com
Greater New Bedford	New Bedford	Brian Silva Interim Youth Program Manager, Connecting Activities Senior Coordinator Quest Center for Innovation MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board Phone: 508-979-1504 x112 Email: brian@masshiregreaternewbedford.com
Hampden	Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, West Springfield	Christine Abramowitz Vice-President of Administration and Workforce Systems MassHire Hampden Workforce Board Phone: 413-787-1547 Email: christine@masshirehcwb.com

Merrimack Valley	Lawrence, Haverhill	Cristy Gomez Youth Workforce Program Manager MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board Phone: 978-722-7086 Email: cgomez@masshiremvwb.org
Metro North	Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden Revere, Somerville	Trey Walsh Associate Director MassHire Metro North Workforce Board Phone: 617-945-7804 Email: twalsh@masshiremetronorth.org
Metro South/ West	Framingham, Waltham	Meghan Burke Director of Young Adult Employment Initiative MassHire Metro South/ West Workforce Board Phone: 617-918-5265 Email: mburke@masshiremsw.com
North Central	Fitchburg, Leominster	Mary Chase Director of Finance and Quality North Central Workforce Board Phone: 978- 534- 1481 x 152 Email: mchase@masshirenorthcentralwb.com
North Shore	Lynn, Salem, Peabody	Katie Crowder Coordinator of Workforce Initiatives MassHire North Shore Workforce Board Phone: 978-741-3805 Email: katie@masshire-northshorewb.com
South Shore	Plymouth, Quincy, Weymouth	India Gerald Director of Youth Service MassHire South Shore Workforce Board Phone: 617-934-4854 Email: igerald@masshiresouthshorewb.com