


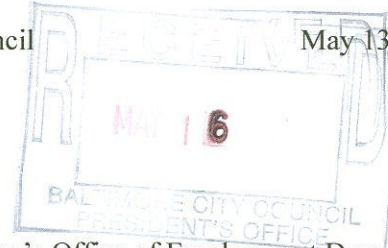
FROM	NAME & TITLE	Karen Sitnick, Director <i>KS</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Mayor's Office of Employment Development 417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 468		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 11-0276R – Informational Hearing YouthWorks 2011		

TO

The Honorable President and Members of the City Council
Room 400, City Hall

DATE:

May 13, 2011



Bill No. 11-0276R requests that the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development report to the City Council on the practices and policies of YouthWorks 2011. Specifically, information has been requested on: the residential demographics of the youth served; an analysis of the return rate of youth who have participated in past years; and a description of the sustainability of the relationships with businesses or agencies that have contributed funds or positions to the program in previous years.

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) has operated YouthWorks for nearly three decades, providing quality summer employment opportunities to many thousands of Baltimore City youth. The YouthWorks program has proven to be an extremely valuable service that not only places young people in constructive work-based learning activities, but focuses on strengthening their ability to make good decisions, build effective communication skills, and prepare for future educational and professional opportunities. Historic evidence bears out the fact that young people with these attributes have access to internal resources that will help them avoid entanglement with gangs, substance abuse, criminal activity, and other negative behaviors that feed the cycle of poverty. The opportunities for employment and personal development YouthWorks offers are all the more critical in these recessionary times, which have had an especially negative impact on people between the ages of 14 – 21 for whom unemployment rates hover near 30%.

The YouthWorks program, which is open to all Baltimore City residents between the ages of 14 and 21, is in high demand. There are 6,064 youth applicants "in the queue" for the 2011 YouthWorks program, all having completed the registration process by the closing date of March 31, 2011. Several charts are included with this resolution response to provide the Council with a more detailed picture of the 2011 YouthWorks program. Chart A illustrates the distribution of YouthWorks applicants by City Council district. Chart B displays the distribution of approved YouthWorks worksites and number of job slots, also by City Council district. Information on registrant demographics including gender, age and racial composition, school status, educational attainment and the percentage receiving public assistance are provided in Charts C through H. Chart I shows the high percentage of applicants (52%) for the 2011 program who have participated in YouthWorks in prior years.

The following highlights several key components of the YouthWorks program:

Worksite Selection: At the core of the program is the quality of the YouthWorks worksites. The strong partnerships we have forged over the years with Baltimore's businesses, community and faith-based organizations and government agencies that annually provide meaningful work experiences for our participants form the foundation for YouthWorks' enduring success. MOED's rigorous worksite application process is designed to guide potential worksite hosts in crafting

Comments

valuable learning opportunities for our young workers. MOED uses the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills for Success (SCANS) – an instrument which was developed by the Secretary of Labor to examine the demands of the workplace and determine whether the current and future workforce are capable of meeting those demands – to select our worksites. We carefully review the jobs and project activities each organization plans to offer to ensure these suggested experiences will help the participants build competencies in four key foundation areas: 1) Using resources effectively; 2) Acquiring, organizing and evaluating information to think critically; 3) Developing strong interpersonal communication skills and behaviors; and 4) Enhancing personal qualities such as responsibility, self esteem and integrity. Additionally, MOED's YouthWorks Employment Service Specialists visit each worksite at least three times per week throughout the summer experience, noting activities, operations and youth participation. MOED also requires all worksite supervisors to attend a comprehensive training session prior to the start of the summer program to ensure all supervisors fully understand their roles and responsibilities, and are provided with general program guidance and support resources.

Youth Recruitment: In December of each year a comprehensive outreach plan is launched to promote awareness of the YouthWorks program for youth and parents. Applications for the YouthWorks program are distributed to all high schools and are available for distribution at many locations (One Stop Career Centers, recreation centers, Youth Opportunity Centers, etc.) across the city. Additionally, promotional information is shared with numerous partner organizations and youth providers, posted on our website and shared with local media. For the 2011 program, each application form was pre-printed with an assigned registration date, time and location to ensure an organized and well-managed registration process. MOED staff orchestrated registration sessions after school and on Saturdays. As stated, more than 6,000 youth completed the registration process by the end of March.

Matching Youth to Work Assignments: YouthWorks provides the first work opportunity for the majority of our younger teens (14 and 15 year olds). Therefore, we believe it is critical to make this a positive experience and to provide as much structure as possible to the work day. These young teens are generally assigned to worksites located in community-based organizations where they have the opportunity to "learn how work works." Small, defined tasks are generally assigned and youth are guided in accomplishing their work. In many cases, youth have been selected by the community organizations in advance, or they are placed at a site as close to their home as possible to limit their travel time.

Our older participants often have some work place familiarity and are more likely to be placed at worksites that require higher skills such as computer literacy, math/writing abilities or other technical skills they may have acquired in school or previous employment. Those who are 16 years and older are also eligible to be referred to employers in the private sector who will put them on their payroll and support their wages. We offer the youth who have not had work-based learning sessions in school or through other youth programs the opportunity to participate in employment readiness seminars over the spring break to help them be better prepared for a successful on the job experience.

YouthWorks participants are exposed to a wide variety of workplaces where they develop skills to become effective employees and build lasting careers. Many YouthWorks worksites are in high growth industries, such as hospitality and tourism, health care and information technology. A high percentage of YouthWorks participants spend the summer gaining business and office skills, while others help keep Baltimore's parks, playgrounds and open spaces clean. Participants beautify city

Notification to youth of their YouthWorks job assignments will be completed by May 31, 2011.

YouthWorks Return on Investment and Sustainability: The impact of this program on our youth's future employment and educational plans is impressive, but tells only part of the story. The public investment in the YouthWorks program yields a broad economic benefit as well. All City and State funds allocated to YouthWorks are directed to paying the wages of participants. The young peoples' earnings help them buy back to school clothes, books and supplies, contribute to their families' household expenses, and even allow them to enjoy some recreational fun – all expenditures that are cycled right back into the City's and State's economy. Moreover, research substantiates the claim that summer jobs programs yield numerous benefits to the community. The 25% reduction in juvenile homicides and 40% reduction in juvenile shootings seen in Baltimore City in 2010 attest to the importance of ongoing support for the YouthWorks program. This is truly a highly effective use of public funds!

The funding provided by Baltimore City's Mayors and City Councils over the past ten years has been an invaluable resource that has allowed YouthWorks to continue to be a staple of positive employment services for our future workforce. By maintaining level funding in fiscal year 2012, Mayor Rawlings-Blake and the Baltimore City Council have made a strong statement about the value of summer jobs for our young people, their families, our communities and local businesses. This year we are particularly grateful to Governor O'Malley and the State for providing more than \$1 million to support YouthWorks 2011.

Perhaps the strongest endorsement for the value of the YouthWorks program is the financial support it receives from area businesses and philanthropic organizations – many of whom are repeat contributors. In fact, nearly 90% of these organizations who have contributed to the 2011 campaign do so year after year. Large corporations like Verizon and Legg Mason have each contributed more than \$120,000 over the past four years, and other companies like Whiting-Turner and Constellation Energy each donated approximately \$7000 a year for the past four years. The Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation has provided summer jobs grants to MOED for 18 years and has awarded \$147,000 over the past four. Other philanthropic contributions have been made annually by the Venable Foundation (\$6,500 over four years) and the William L. and Victoria Q. Adams Foundation (\$7,050 over four years).

Private sector employers not only make monetary contributions, many also employ hundreds of summer youth on their company payrolls. For more than 30 years, Martin's Caterers has hired between 150 and 200 youth per summer as production workers preparing breakfasts and lunches for Baltimore City's Summer Feeding Program. The National Aquarium in Baltimore has also been a valued partner hiring about 20 each for the past three years. Continuing its relationship with YouthWorks, the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Health (BACH) will expose 60 young people to careers in healthcare within hospitals, and long-term care facilities and Johns Hopkins Health System and University will hire more than 200 teens again this summer.

MOED is very proud of the YouthWorks track record and its reputation as being a national model for urban summer employment programs. In March of 2009, the federal government provided funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to cities across the country to operate summer youth employment programs. Many cities had not run summer programs for more than ten years as this was the first time in more than a decade that stand-alone federal funds were allocated for summer jobs. As such, most urban areas were ill-equipped to hit the ground running

with such limited planning and start up time. To address this challenge, the U.S. Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council invited a small group of cities – Baltimore included – to share their summer program operations, materials and forms and to provide technical assistance to scores of city workforce directors at a Summer Jobs Best Practices seminar in St. Louis. Many of MOED's standard applications, protocols and practices are likely to still be implemented in San Antonio, Carlsbad and Pittsburg – to name a few!

In summary, MOED's YouthWorks 2011 program will give Baltimore City young people the chance to authentically experience the world of work at a crucial time in their lives as maturing adults. Beyond the direct benefits, there are many related positive outcomes for our community at large.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important public policy issue.

cc: LiLi Taylor, Executive Liaison for Workforce Policy, MOED