



## Central MA Region's Second-Chance Youth Programs Continue to Shine

Performance results for the State's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth programs have been released for the FY 2017 third quarter (July 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017), and the Central MA region's outcomes continue to be among the best in the Commonwealth's 16 workforce areas.

WIOA Youth programs are funded by the US Department of Labor. The programs provide access to 14 different service and support elements for at-risk youth aged 16 to 24, with a heavy emphasis upon serving out of school youth. These program elements include paid and unpaid work experiences, occupational skill training, leadership development activities, and comprehensive guidance and counseling. Four new elements -- financial literacy, transition to post-secondary education and training, labor market services, and entrepreneurial training -- were introduced to the Federal program with the recent transition to WIOA from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which only required 10 youth program elements.

In Central MA, the CMWIB has contracted with four agencies to deliver WIOA Youth programs. These are:

- Youth Opportunities Upheld, Inc., which provides high school equivalency, pre-employment services, enrichment workshops, career technical training in Culinary Arts, Weatherization Installation, and Certified Nurse Assistant, as well as follow-up support to clients in Worcester, Milford, Whitinsville, Southbridge and the Brookfields.
- Worcester Community Action Council, Inc., which provides high school equivalency, pre-employment/life skills training, career pathways exploration with emphasis on college enrollment, as well as follow-up support to participants who reside in the Worcester area.
- Training Resources of America, Inc., which provides high school equivalency services, pre-employment, and career training for the Building Trades industry and Advanced Customer Service, Sales Certification and Retail Management, as well as follow-up support to participants in Worcester.
- Fieldstone School, which provides Nurse's Aide/Home Health Aide training, pre-employment skills and enrichment workshops, as well as follow up support to clients ages 17-24 in the Worcester area.

Central MA has the highest outcomes statewide for Entered Employment, Entered Post-secondary Education, and Degree or Certificates attained, while continuing to serve participants with very diverse backgrounds; 52% of participants are youth of color and 26% are youth with disabilities. The region has

also focused upon serving older youth disconnected from school or work, and more than half of all enrolled participants are 19 years of age or older this year.

Ed Gagne, the CMWIB's Director of Youth Services and Adult Literacy Programs, also notes that our region has applied the highest number of "new elements" mandated by WIOA, as reflected in the performance reports. Gagne further states, "These reports show the amount of hard work that we and our contracted partners put forth to help our region's disconnected youth. Each statistic points to another youth helped by our efficient investment in employment and training initiatives and continued efforts to offer public support for career success."

*For more information about WIOA Youth Programs, Contact:*

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