



Bridging the Opportunity Gap:
Department of Youth Services (DYS) Job Readiness and Employability Program

A Request for Proposals Issued by:
Commonwealth Corporation

in partnership with the
Massachusetts Department of Youth Services

October 15, 2007

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List of DYS Community Re-entry Center Contacts

List of Pathways to Success By 21 (P21) Regional Contacts

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**Bridging the Opportunity Gap:
DYS Job Readiness and Employability Program**

Purpose. The Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp) invites proposals from youth-serving organizations, including the sixteen Local Workforce Investment Boards in Massachusetts, One-Stop Career Centers, community-based and/or non-profit organizations (including but not limited to DYS Community Re-entry Center vendors) to undertake activities that create opportunities for effective career readiness that provide “bridges” to employment services for youth in the custody of the Department of Youth Services.

This Request for Proposals has been designed to accomplish three primary goals:

- Funds are being offered to provide direct services that meet the career readiness, pre-employment and employment needs of youth in the custody of DYS;
- Grants will result in the delivery of services to youth in DYS custody (and who are currently reporting to a DYS Community Re-entry Center) that are asset-based and involve personnel that have demonstrated success working effectively with DYS clients;
- Grant activities will focus attention on developing or strengthening collaborations and partnerships between existing agencies and organizations that have expertise with youth job readiness and youth training and/or employment and have a proven track record of working successfully with youth in DYS custody.

Background. There are approximately 2,000 youth in care in DYS on any given date. While DYS provides treatment to youth who reside in residential programs, DYS is also responsible for providing education and career development services to DYS youth who have transitioned out of residential treatment back to their home community (and now currently report to DYS’s Community Re-entry Centers). CommCorp is currently partnering with the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services to improve educational and career services, both during the period of custody and in transitioning youth back to the community. CommCorp’s mission is to build pathways for youth and adults to prepare for high demand jobs, in concert with regional and state partners. On a state level, CommCorp and DYS has begun to emphasize strategies that serve eligible DYS youth more effectively, including services that are available through the Workforce Investment Act, Pathways to Success by 21, the Executive Office of Public Safety’s Shannon grants and other youth programming.

CommCorp, in partnership with the DYS, is seeking proposals that result in innovative approaches to providing job readiness, job training, and employment services and are tailored to the unique needs of DYS clients currently being served by DYS Community Re-entry Centers. CommCorp encourages applicants to think creatively about how to design and deliver services with organizations and agencies that are well versed in serving the racial, ethnic and cultural background of DYS youth. Of particular interest are proposals that blend the services and skills of organizations with in-depth expertise in job readiness and employment along with services that are delivered in a supported, youth friendly manner.

To support this approach, CommCorp encourages organizations to submit proposals that include a range of coordinated job readiness, training and pre-employment-related services including:

- Strategies for recruiting and retaining youth in pre-employment and employment program activities;
- Strategies for recruiting program personnel who have a demonstrated interest in working with youth in DYS custody;
- Strategies for case managing youth so they are successful in all aspects of the program;
- Personal motivation and life skills training (including leadership development);
- Use of the Career Decision Making assessment that was implemented to youth during their DYS assessment phase;
- Use of the Massachusetts Work-based Learning Plan for all internship and employment experiences.
- Career and job readiness curriculum that is oriented to learning needs of youth;
- Tutoring in basic literacy and numeracy required for pre-employment experiences and job placement;
- Pre-employment experiences (for instance, structured internships, job shadowing, job mentoring or any other type of work-based learning experience);
- Placement in vocational and occupational learning opportunities;
- Placement and support in part-time or full-time employment opportunities;
- Any other strategies to prepare youth for employment;
- Referral to Adult Basic Education, GED and pre-GED training with program partners;
- Support in making a successful transition to post-secondary education (such as community college, apprenticeship, technical training or other types of college level experiences); and

The program design should also include strategies to provide individualized support for each participating youth that results in a connected approach with the families and guardians of the participating youth as well as other state, local and community agency personnel involved in the lives of participating youth (e.g., DYS case managers and staff, Department of Social Services staff, and other involved individuals).

The ultimate goal for the grant funds is the design and delivery of an innovative employability program, focused on high quality career and job readiness and pre-employment services that are delivered by staff with *demonstrated* success working with youth in DYS custody (particularly those youth accessible through DYS Community Re-entry Centers). We also seek proposals that leverage the services of more than one organization, and are particularly interested in service delivery from organizations with an effective track record of working with youth in DYS custody and in assisting them to prepare for and

succeed in employment. This RFP will provide funds to selected applicants that can meet this challenge.

Eligibility for Grant Award. This RFP solicits proposals from any non-profit or community-based organization, one-stop career center, and/or Workforce Investment Board/Youth Council within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The strongest proposals will reflect a collaborative approach, combining organizations (including the DYS Community Re-entry Center) that can partner together to effectively serve youth who are currently in DYS custody. An organization may submit a proposal by itself, or a collaborative proposal can be submitted by a lead organization on behalf of itself and several named partners. The proposal must include an original signature(s) of a responsible official(s). If a LWIB serves as a lead organization, the grant proposal must include the signature of the LWIB's fiscal agent.

Every proposal must also include the signature of the participating DYS entity (such as the director of a DYS Community Re-entry Center or other DYS regional staff). A list of DYS regional contacts is located in the Attachments section.

Funding Levels. A total of approximately \$500,000 will be awarded through this request for proposals. CommCorp anticipates awarding between six and eight grants, with a grant range of between \$50,000 and \$70,000 each.

Use of Funds. Funds granted under this proposal must be used to serve youth who are currently in the custody of the Department of Youth Services. Participating youth should be between the ages of 15 and 21 and be currently affiliated with a DYS Community Re-entry Center. Program funds must be targeted specifically to youth in DYS custody and not targeted at court-involved youth (youth not currently in DYS custody).

Funds may be used for to pay for staff (including program coordination), non-DYS case managers, professional consultants, transportation, youth stipends, curriculum materials, and food for participating youth. Administrative costs may be no more than 5% of requested funds.

Coordination with Agencies and Organizations. This request for proposals has been designed to encourage collaboration between local DYS entities and local community and workforce groups that can effectively provide pre-employment and employment services to youth in DYS custody. Selected partners should address their demonstrated success and effectiveness in working with youth in DYS care, be able to tailor program design and implementation to the specific needs of this youth population (for instance, programs should address a variety of learning styles, particularly those that are interactive and engaging to youth culture, deliver services in a "hands-on", non-classroom oriented environment, involve program staff who are motivated and possess an ability to be culturally sensitive to participating youth). Services should also be designed with innovative program delivery in facilities and environments that are oriented and accessible to youth that reflected with the DYS population.

Examples of Project Services. Proposals should clearly identify program design, activities, strategies, and employment-related outcomes that will be funded through this grant award.

Examples of project activities and services include:

- Design of program services that take advantage of existing WIA youth services that can be customized to the needs of youth in DYS custody;
- Special efforts for both outreach and follow-up to engage youth who are eligible for services but face barriers that prevent them from consistently attending or participating in services;
- The development and implementation of an individual service strategy to identify short and long term goals for each participating youth in the area of employment readiness;
- Adapting one stop career center services so that they are youth friendly, and are provided through an asset-based and youth development perspective;
- Creating more effective brokering between employers and youth, for work-based experiences including structured internships, and part-time or full-time employment;
- Involvement of youth in the planning and service delivery process;
- Designing a program delivery strategy for job and career exploration, and/or vocational training and employment readiness to assist the youth/young adult with employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- Defining operational details for program participants, including stipends for clients based on program attendance and achievements; a plan for six-month follow-up services; and assistance with transportation and other support services needs of clients;
- Demonstrated capacity to serve youth from a variety of cultural, economic and linguistic backgrounds; and
- Strong collaborations with local DYS entities and local community service providers to enhance the array of services available to meet the needs of clients, including academic support programs (related to job readiness), career readiness, vocational and occupational skill training, exposure to the world of work, schools, health and mental health care, substance abuse services, housing support, etc.
- Leveraging multiple funding sources such as the regional Pathways to Success by 21 grants (www.p21.us), WIA youth funds (<http://www.commcorp.org/wia/index.html>), Executive Office of Public Safety funding through a Shannon grant, YouthWorks (www.commcorp.org/youthworks/index.html), and funding available through some workforce investment boards.

Required Proposal Components. In order to receive a grant, the applicant must submit a written proposal that provides (in sequence) responses to Proposal Components I – V.

Component I. Cover sheet — Use the Cover Sheet form supplied in this RFP to provide all appropriate signatories, and to identify a key program and fiscal contact for your proposal.

Component II. Proposal Narrative — Proposals must include a brief written narrative of no more than ten (10) pages of double-spaced text printed using a 12-point font and one-inch margins. Letters of support may be submitted but only if they contain a specific commitment of resources to the implementation plan. Data tables included within the text may be single-spaced. A competitive Narrative would include:

A. Identification and Description of Proposal Partners: Information on the collaborating organizations' qualifications for working with youth in DYS custody, including their demonstrated track record of working *effectively and successfully* with the DYS youth population, specifically in the area of job readiness, pre-employment and employment. Proposals must include and have a signature from the director of the participating DYS Community Reentry or Neighborhood Center(s).

B. Recruitment and Retention Strategy of DYS Clients

- Recruitment of DYS Youth: Please include information that summarizes the target population expected to participate in program activities, including the specific number of youth to be served in each component of the program (recruitment, job readiness, work-based learning experiences, employment and other services), their DYS Re-entry Center, and the geographic location of emphasis for participating youth. Describe how youth will be recruited to the program.
- Retention of DYS Youth: Please describe the range of incentives, stipends and strategies that will be used to retain youth in all program components.
- Description of rewards, incentives and stipends – that detail each program component and the specific reward/incentive for participation and completion. Stipends can be less than the current minimum wage but should not exceed the current minimum wage of \$7.50 per hour and starting on 1/1/08, \$8.00 per hour.

C. Pre-Employment Training Program Elements: Activities should include job and career readiness training. Life skills and leadership training, and mentoring activities are strongly encouraged.

- Use of the previously administered Career Decision Making (CDM) tool that was administered to clients during the DYS Assessment phase. Each funded program is strongly encouraged to work with the DYS CRC staff to obtain this information (previously administered to all DYS clients during their residential DYS stay) to help the employment interests of participating youth.

- Career and Job/Workplace Readiness training – a minimum of 10 hours total per client is highly encouraged. Materials, hands-on training approaches and curriculum should be described.
- Identification of career related activities such as job shadowing, career fairs, employer tours, etc.
- Identification and delivery of mentoring program services that connect each DYS youth with a caring adult.

D. Employability Training Program Elements:

- Description of work experience – Each participating youth should be placed in a work experience (internship, part-time or full time employment) for a minimum of 8 hours per week for a minimum of 8 weeks. These experiences may be subsidized with grant funds.
- Use of the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan – The Plan should be completed for all youth placed in work-based learning experiences and also used to evaluate the youth's workforce performance during the internship/subsidized employment phase. Technical assistance on the MWBLP is available through the Massachusetts Department Education – for more information on the MWBLP please go to <http://www.skillslibrary.com/wbl.htm>
- Identification and description of specific vocational shop instruction that must take place for a minimum of 8 hours per week for a minimum of 20 weeks (only applicable to programs taking place in a vocational training high school or facility).

E. Educational and Case Management Services

- The identification of an educational strategy that will provide targeted DYS clients with connections to the public schools (if the youth is a drop-out), Adult Basic Education, literacy training and/or GED services.
- Description of case management or “caring adult” strategies that will assist youth in all aspects of program success.

F. Connections to Other Funding/Resource Linkages:

- Describe any linkages to the workforce investment board region's Pathways to Success by 21 initiative which provides funding for a variety of employment and educational services for underserved youth (for more information go to www.p21.us). The anticipated P21 funding level for 2008-2009 is up to \$104,000 per Workforce Investment Area to support both continued efforts of regional P-21 partnerships and to support services and programs that serve older, out of school youth. A list of P21 regional leads and their contact information is located in the Attachments section.

- Describe any other funding sources that will be used to support the DYS clients participating in this program (WIA youth funds, Shannon Grant funds, Youth Works funds). Beginning in January 2008, in addition to summer employment for youth, YouthWorks will incorporate a year-round employment component for undeserved youth in twenty-two cities and towns in Massachusetts (for more information go to (www.commcorp.org/youthworks/index.html)).

Component III. Proposed Program Workplan - Using the workplan template from the Attachments section, describe specific activities that will be accomplished with the support of grant funds, identify a local partner who has the lead responsibility for assuring the activity is accomplished, and include a timeline for when the activities will occur. The workplan should also identify specific anticipated outcomes of grant activities for the youth who will be served. Outcomes should include number of youth completing job readiness, job training and pre-employment activities; number of youth projected to participate in work-based activities such as job shadowing and structured internships; number of youth projected to receive actual employment. Outcomes will be tracked and reported to DYS via the CommCorp database.

Suggested DYS and CommCorp outcomes for each proposed program include:

- A minimum of 25 DYS clients will be recruited and complete all aspects of the overall proposed employability program.
- 75% of youth who begin pre-employment activities will complete these activities.
- 60% of youth who begin employment activities will complete these activities.
- 20% of youth who receive services in this program will receive educational services that are identified in Component II E (above).

Component IV. Budget Forms – You must submit both a line item budget (in attachments section) and a budget narrative that describes your planned uses of grant funds. A budget sheet is attached in the Appendix. Please note that not more than 5 percent of grant funds may be used to meet grant administrative costs.

Instructions for RFP Submission. Each proposal must consist of an original and four (4) copies. The cover sheet for the original must contain an original signature of the individual who is the official signatory for the identified fiscal agent. All proposals must be fully complete and contain all required attachments.

All proposals must be received before 5:00 p.m., Friday, November 9, 2007. Delivery of proposals is the sole responsibility of the applicant. Submission of proposals by facsimile or electronic means (*i.e.*, e-mail) is not permitted. CommCorp is not responsible for irregularities in delivery on the part of the U.S. Postal Service or private courier services.

RFP submissions will be stamped with a time and date of receipt. Proposals, or any parts thereof, received after the required date and time will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered.

Proposals must be submitted to:

**Nikki Bynoe
Commonwealth Corporation
529 Main Street, Suite 110
Boston, MA 02129**

Evaluation of Proposals and Grant Award Process. Proposals will be evaluated by a review committee that will likely consist of representatives from CommCorp, the Department Youth Services, and possibly youth currently in the custody of the Department of Youth Services.

Review and assessment will be based on the following priorities:

- applications that reflect a creative, collaborative and community-centered approach to meeting the job readiness and employability needs of eligible youth;
- the degree to which the applicant organizations can demonstrate a successful track record (retention of youth in programs, successful job readiness, pre-employment and employment outcomes) working with youth in DYS custody.
- the quality and extent to which the project plan states goals and objectives that are measurable and attainable;
- the quality and clarity of the proposed service strategy;
- the number of youth who will be directly served through grant activities;
- the degree to which the proposal communicates the presence of a working relationship between local DYS entities and appropriate partner organizations representing the appropriate combination of education, workforce, social services, and youth development;
- the degree of support services that will assure the success of participating youth to complete all program activities and be prepared for employment or continued vocational training experiences; and
- strategies that will ensure sustainability of program services beyond the grant period.

CommCorp reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or to accept any and all proposals, in whole or in part, if deemed to be in the best interest of the Commonwealth. Proposals will also be considered for the extent to which they provide a geographic balance in DYS regions across the Commonwealth as well as addressing the population areas that host the largest number of DYS clients.

Grant funds will be awarded through a contract from CommCorp. Grantees must comply with all fiscal and administrative requirements, including program and fiscal reporting, established by CommCorp, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the Department of Youth Services. The grant duration will be December 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008.

Grantee Requirements: Successful grantees will participate in up to two statewide working sessions to share program design and implementation activities between the time period December 2007 and June 2008. Grantees will also be required to complete all reporting requirements by July 15, 2008

Bridging the Opportunity Gap: Department of Youth Services (DYS) Job Readiness and Employability Program

Proposal Cover Sheet

Workforce Investment Area: _____

Applicant Agency: _____

Contact Person: _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: _____

Address 2: _____

City and Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Proposal Signatories (at least two agencies must be listed)

Name of Lead Organization

Authorized Signature & Title

Name of DYS Entity

Authorized Signature & Title

Name of Partner Organization

Authorized Signature & Title

Name of Partner Organization

Authorized Signature & Title

Name of LWIB Fiscal Agent (if applicable)

Authorized Signature & Title

Attachments

Bridging the Opportunity Gap: Department of Youth Services (DYS) Job Readiness and Employability Program

Proposed Project Budget

	Requested Funds	Matching Fund (not required but strongly encouraged)	Total Project Cost
Personnel Costs			
Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0
Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Subtotal: Salaries and Benefits</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
Direct Costs			
Consultants and Subcontracts	\$0	\$0	\$0
Youth Stipends	\$0	\$0	\$0
Transportation for Youth	\$0	\$0	\$0
Copying	\$0	\$0	\$0
Curriculum/Training Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies/Food (for youth)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Misc. (must be \$1,000 or less)	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Subtotal: Direct Expenses</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
Indirect Costs			
General and Administrative	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Subtotal: Indirect Expenses</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
Total Project Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note: Please provide an accompanying detailed budget narrative for proposed expenditures.

**Bridging the Opportunity Gap: Department of Youth Services Job Readiness and Employability Program
Proposed Project Workplan**

Key Activity	Outcomes	Lead Partner	Timeline	Number of Youth Served

Attachments

List of DYS Community Contacts

Each application should clearly identify the Community Re-entry Center program location to be served and the collaborating Community Re-entry Center staff.

Region	Contact Person	Telephone Number
Metro Region	Tina Saetti, Director of Operations	(617) 740-0105
Southeast Region	Robert Richards, Regional Director of Community Services	(508) 824-1484 Ext. 1112
Northeast Region	John Bates, Regional Director of Community Services	(978) 686-4014 Ext. 409
Western Region	Lorrie Rosario, Regional Director of Community Services	(413) 731-4907
Central Region	Alisa Padavano- Deveau, Regional Director of Community Services	(508) 475-2702



List of Pathways to Success by 21 Regional Contacts

LOCAL REGION	LEAD/CONTACT PERSON
Berkshire	Heather Shogry Berkshire County Regional Employment Board One Fenn Street, Suite 201 Pittsfield, MA 01201 (413) 442-7177
Boston	Kathy Hamilton Boston Private Industry Council 2 Oliver Street, 7 th Floor Boston, MA 02109 (617) 488-1316
Bristol	Mary Walek Bristol Workforce Investment Board One Government Center, 5 th Floor Fall River, MA 02722 (508) 675-1165
Brockton	Brian Hannon Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board 34 School Street Brockton, MA 02301 (508) 584-3234
Cape & Islands	Courtney Garcia Cape & Islands Workforce Investment Board Barnstable Municipal Airport 480 Barnstable Road Hyannis, MA 02601 (508) 775-5900
Central Mass (Worcester)	Central Massachusetts Regional Employment Board 44 Front Street, Suite 300 Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 799-1590
Franklin/Hampshire	Patricia Crosby Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board One Arch Place Greenfield, MA 01301 (413) 755-1360
Greater Lowell	Vera Gallagher Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board 107 Merrimack Street Lowell, MA 01852 (978) 805-4807
Greater New Bedford	Adam Chapdelaine Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board 277 Union Street, Suite 206 New Bedford, MA 02740 (508) 979-1504

LOCAL REGION	LEAD/CONTACT PERSON
Hampden County	Brad Sperry Regional Employment Board of Hampden County 1441 Main Street, Suite 111 Springfield, MA 01103 (413) 755-1360
Metro North	Priscilla Golding Metro North Regional Employment Board 125 Cambridge Park Drive Cambridge, MA 02140 (617) 864-1524
Metro South/West	Besty McIntyre Metro South/West Regional Employment Board 1671 Worcester Road, Suite 302 Framingham, MA 01701 (508) 665-5990
Merrimack Valley (Lawrence)	Chris Shannon Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board 60 Island Street Lawrence, MA 01840 (978) 682-7099
North Central	Tim Sappington North Central MA Regional Employment Board 1355 Central Street Leominster, MA 01453 (978) 534-1023
North Shore	Shari Cornett Southern Essex Regional Employment Board 70 Washington Street Salem, MA 01970 (978)-741-3805
South Coastal	Patricia Harold South Coastal Workforce Investment Board 152 Parkingway Street Quincy, MA 02169 (617) 745-4020