

## Questions from the RFR Informational Session

Held April 7, 2009

### ARRA (Stimulus) Youth Summer Jobs

**Question:** What is the purpose of the Request for Responses (RFR)?

Answer: When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was signed into law last February, it was clear that Greater New Bedford would need to be well positioned to offer jobs to an additional 500 youth. The RFR was prepared in order to gauge interest among area businesses and organizations to either offer job slots to youth or develop programming that would provide area youth with a world-of-work experience.

Federal procurement laws require that awards in excess of \$25,000 must result from a Request for Proposals (RFP). Since many local programs will require those larger awards, an RFP will be issued very shortly. The RFR may be used as a guide for programs that are interested in responding to the RFP, as most of the requirements are delineated in the RFR.

**Question:** Where do the youth come from?

Answer: New Directions Southcoast, Inc. has been circulating applications throughout the community and will be determining eligibility. All youth deemed eligible will then be referred to a program or employer.

**Question:** Where may we obtain applications for youth?

Answer: The application forms have been distributed widely throughout the area. They may also be obtained by going to [www.newdirectionssouthcoast.org](http://www.newdirectionssouthcoast.org). If you are interested in having applications available at your program, please let Wendy Andrade know. She can be reached at [WAndrade@detma.org](mailto:WAndrade@detma.org).

**Question:** Are the applications available in Spanish and Portuguese?

Answer: Applications in Portuguese have just been developed. Spanish-language applications will probably be ready for distribution next week.

**Question:** If I refer some young people to New Directions to complete an application, will those youth then be allowed to participate in my program?

Answer: If an employer or program refers youth to New Directions, New Directions will first make sure those youth are eligible, then make every effort to refer the youth back to the employer or program. However, if an employer or program refers youth who are found to be ineligible, New Directions will notify the employer or program and make every effort to fill available slots with eligible youth?

**Question:** Does New Directions require drug testing?

Answer: New Directions does not test for drugs. If your program requires drug testing, it will be incumbent on you to arrange for testing.

**Question:** Does New Directions CORI-check youth?

Answer: As a practice, New Directions does not CORI check youth for placement. If an employer has CORI requirements, then that employer should contact New Directions directly.

**Question:** What happens to those youth I refer who DO NOT meet WIA eligibility criteria?

Answer: Because the application includes questions pertaining to both the federal funding as well as the state grant programs, any submitted applications that do not meet WIA criteria will be considered for state funding options, such as Youth Works. There will be no additional application procedures or requirements. NB: Youth Works funding is available in New Bedford and Wareham only.

**Question:** Is this opportunity only for those youth deemed most at-risk?

Answer: Yes. WIA requirements were not relaxed for stimulus programming. All youth must be low income and have at least one other barrier (for example, court involvement, served by the Dept. of Children and Families, be teen parents, have an Individual Education Plan).

**Question:** Do all Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Performance Measures apply to youth engaged in a summer job experience that is connected to the stimulus funding?

Answer: No. The only required outcome is workforce readiness. This is documented using the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (WBLP). The WBLP can be viewed and downloaded at [www.skillslibrary.com](http://www.skillslibrary.com). Copies are also available through the Workforce Investment Board.

*HOWEVER*, if youth are in a program that runs prior to May 1, 2009 and after September 30, 2009, documentation of all performance outcomes will be required.

**Question:** What costs may be paid with stimulus dollars?

Answer: Youth wages will be paid through the Workforce Investment Board. Employers may prefer to pay youth directly and be reimbursed. Costs associated with supervisory personnel are allowable, as are reasonable costs for equipment and supplies. Under WIA, equipment-related purchases do not always remain with the program.

**Question:** What is a good supervisor-to-youth ratio for a program or employer?

Answer: Generally, one supervisor to ten youth is a good guideline. Circumstances may dictate otherwise.

**Question:** If I only need a supervisor, should I fill out the RFR or wait for the RFP?

Answer: As long as your projected expenses do not exceed \$25,000, the RFR may satisfy your need. These will be reviewed as they are received.