



**MASSHIRE**  
**METRO NORTH**

# **YouthWorks Request for Proposals 2024-2025**

**MassHire Metro North Workforce Board**  
SPACES Davis Square, 240 Elm St.  
Somerville, MA 02144  
[MassHireMetroNorth.org](https://www.MassHireMetroNorth.org)

## **Introduction**

The YouthWorks employment program, operated by the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board (MNWB), has annually offered significant and rewarding employment to more than 900 young individuals in the Metro North region. In the current year alone, close to 1,000 youths successfully secured employment opportunities this past summer.

MNWB is issuing this request for proposal (RFP) to select qualified providers to deliver high quality YouthWorks programming throughout the Metro North region. These employment opportunities are made possible with YouthWorks funds provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp). Youth participants are each provided with the support and guidance needed to ensure that the benefits of this work experience extend beyond the paycheck, by developing the essential job skills and workplace readiness needed to excel in their future career field.

YouthWorks aims to reduce juvenile delinquency and youth and young adult homelessness in high-risk areas through employment of participants who are not more than the age of 25. This is a state-funded youth employment program that helps teens and young adults gain the skills and experience needed to find and keep jobs and begin to design a path toward sustained success. Eligible participants of these programs are 14-to-25-year-olds whose family income does not exceed the annual equivalent of 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

A primary focus at MNWB is our dedication to enhancing and delivering high-quality programs for young individuals throughout the Metro North region. MNWB is looking for providers that foster and advocate for a wide range of meaningful work experiences in high demand industries for the Metro North region. Interested providers should submit a program plan that demonstrates how the proposed service model will offer impactful experiences for at-risk youth and young adults in the Metro North region. MNWB anticipates providers will propose innovative approaches with strategic partnerships that will provide Metro North youth with quality work experiences and career development opportunities.

All interested organizations and institutions interested in participating as a Metro North YouthWorks partner, for the upcoming year 2024-25, must submit their RFP proposal by March 15th, 2024. *Please refer to page 32 for more information on how to submit your program proposal.*

## **MassHire Metro North Workforce Board as the Lead Entity**

In the Metro North region, the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board (MNWB) is the lead entity and fiscal agent for the YouthWorks program. MNWB prepares the regional application to CommCorp's YouthWorks Request for Responses (RFR) and is the contractor to CommCorp for the region-wide program.

*Successful applicants to this RFP will be subcontractors to MNWB.*

- **Regional Support Component and Collaboration:**

MNWB, *as regional lead*, provides support and technical assistance to all YouthWorks program partners. MNWB YouthWorks staff will be your first point of contact for any program support needs.

There will be a range of group-based regional support offerings that guide practice and develop local leadership and innovation. Consistent participation in statewide, regional, and local support gatherings is a requirement of the YouthWorks grant. The following list provides details about the regional support services.

- Monthly meetings with regional leads and YouthWorks leadership team
- Statewide regional support and updates convening.
- Six site visits take place throughout the programming year – these visits are organized by CommCorp. MNWB will also be carrying out less intensive individual site visits. Specifically, we will observe program activities and randomly engage with 2-3 participants to discuss their program experience.
- Individualized regional support via meetings and calls will support grantees in effective program design, implementation, and assessment.

In addition, CommCorp, as the funder, also provides support to the region. Program regional support is based on YouthWorks performance standards which have been established to support shared understandings of promising practices in subsidized youth training and employment programs. A regional support person will be an assigned staff member from Commonwealth Corporation.

## **Programmatic Elements and Collaborative Program**

### **Administration**

YouthWorks partners should strive to provide participants with quality work and learning experiences that foster effective career development, build professional skills, self-awareness and to also connect participants to peers, community and future opportunities through supportive structures and quality case management. As the regional lead, MNWB is committed to offering essential support to sub-grantees, ensuring the delivery of high-quality programs for youth in the Metro North region.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

In its role as the YouthWorks lead entity in the Metro North region, MNWB is devoted to incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into the programs and services offered to our communities. Our vision is to foster a flourishing, inclusive, and resilient regional economy,

ensuring that businesses and youth residents have fair access to workforce development resources and quality employment opportunities. Similarly, as a leader in workforce development, the Commonwealth Corporation is committed to having Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strongly embedded into all programs and services provided, reflected in the people they impact and their workplace culture. CommCorp's vision of a society where everyone has the opportunity for upward economic mobility cannot be accomplished in isolation, but through the collective dedication and support of all staff, partners, board members, and the communities we reside in and serve. Having this in mind, programs are expected to serve vulnerable participants who can self-attest to one or more of the following at-risk factors:

- court-involved;
- Department of Youth Services (DYS)-committed, on juvenile probation, gang-involved, CRS, juvenile arrest;
- homelessness or being a runaway, including young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning, in addition to youth of color;
- foster care or being close to aging out of foster care; having aged out of foster care;
- poor academic performance or a school stop-out;
- single parent household;
- having a disability or special needs;
- lack of fluency in English, or being a foreign immigrant; or
- being a teen parent.

## **YouthWorks Tiers, Breakdown by CommCorp**

The YouthWorks program serves a wide range of participants in terms of ages, levels of career awareness, and goals. To provide all participants with effective and relevant youth workforce development services, YouthWorks consists of four specific tiers: Service and Project-based Learning for 14-15-year-olds, Early and Career Trajectory Experiences for 16-17-year-olds, Career Pathway Training and Support for 18-21-year-olds and Emerging into Career and Career Management for 22-25-year-olds.

The YouthWorks program will continue to operate as a tiered wage program with a base of \$15/hr across all tiers.

- Tier 1 Participants must be paid an hourly stipend/wage between \$15.00/hr. and \$16.25/hr.
- Tier 2 Participants must be paid an hourly stipend/wage between \$15.00/hr. and 17.50/hr.

- Tier 3 Participants must be paid an hourly wage between \$15.00/hr. and \$18.75/hr.
- Tier 4 Participants must be paid an hourly wage between \$15.00/hr. and \$20.00/hr.

Programs are not restricted by minimums or maximums for their application related to their budget.

The table below outlines the service strategy for the tiers. Programming should provide a bridge that will allow participants starting in Tier 1 to transition, as needed, through Tier 4.

Applicants seeking to offer Tier 4 programming must identify a singular industry or occupational emphasis and demonstrate the capacity to deliver pertinent expertise, support, equipment, and associated resources for the programming.

**Note:** applicants are encouraged to plan for and support a full age, stage, and path approach to programming for participants up to 25-years of age. Understanding the value of stage; if, based on in-take/interviewing, a case manager believes a participant would be best served in a tier that does not align with age, but stage, it is encouraged programming that aligns.

*Below a breakdown of each Tier:*

		<b><i>Emerging Workforce</i></b>	
<b>Tier 1 – Service and Project-Based Learning: <i>Signal Success – Starting off Strong</i></b>	<b>Tier 2 – Early and Career- Trajectory Experience: <i>Signal Success – Building a Professional Self</i></b>		
14-15-year-old participants	16-17-year-old participants	<b>Tier 3 – Career Pathway Training and Support: <i>Signal Success – Crafting a Career Path</i></b>	<b>Tier 4 – Career Pathway Credentialing and certifications: <i>Signal Success – Emerging into Career and Career Management</i></b>
Wage range: \$15.00 – \$16.25/hr.	Wage range: \$15.00 – \$17.50/hr.		
<b><u>Cycle 1 Period: June – August 30</u></b>	<b><u>Cycle 1 Period: June – August 30</u></b>		
60-150 program hours	100-240 program hours	18-21-year-old participants	22-25-year-old participants
<b><u>Cycle 2 Period: September 2 – June 30, 2025</u></b>	<b><u>Cycle 2 Period: September 2 – June 30, 2025</u></b>	Wage range: \$15.00 – \$18.75/hr.	Wage range: \$15.00 – \$20.00/hr.
40-300 program hours	40-300 program hours	<b><u>Cycle 1 Period: June – August 30</u></b>	Region specific cohorts expanding three (3) to four (4) months of

		120-340 program hours  <b><u>Cycle 2 Period:</u></b> <b><u>September 2 – June 30, 2025</u></b>  40-420 program hours	programming, ideally, that aligns with the start of each Cycle
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<b>Key Components</b>			
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<b>Case Management</b>			
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management and wrap-around services, as needed</li> <li>• Cohort-based case management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management and wrap-around services, as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management and wrap-around services, as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management and wrap-around services, as needed</li> </ul>
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<b>Career Exploration/Work Experience</b>			
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service-learning projects coordinated with local community partners and/or supportive small group introductory work placements</li> <li>• Sector aligned project-based learning intensives with additional supports for younger participants</li> <li>• Match participants with learning opportunities that foster transferable skills and early career pipeline programming with specific employer partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to career exploration through volunteerism and civic engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job placements focused on a particular industry and supported by additional career awareness and exploration activities</li> <li>• Provide participants with skills, exposure, and experience to obtain entry-level positions in high-demand fields and make informed career plans for sustainability and growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement with business/organizations looking to hire</li> <li>• Identified full- or part-time employment at the completion of the program</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional: In-person job shadowing on specific trades/careers</li> </ul>			
<b>Career Readiness and Planning</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in Signal Success curriculum</li> <li>• Signal Success – Starting off Strong</li> <li>• Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin career pathway planning</li> <li>• Defined career exploration activities that support increased awareness of in-demand industries</li> <li>• Engage in Signal Success curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in micro career pathway course(s) focused on a specific career or industry</li> <li>• Collaborative and teamwork activities</li> <li>• Engage participant in leadership opportunities</li> <li>• Engage in Signal Success curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in Signal Success curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Skill Development</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to targeted transferable skill development</li> <li>• Optional: CPR/First-Aid training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to targeted transferable skill development</li> <li>• Interview practice – engaging in Talk Hiring platform – and individual personal branding focused on skills, interests, and assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational training models with relevant industry certifications</li> <li>• Work-based learning and skills training linked to pre-apprenticeship certification</li> <li>• Skills to find and keep an unsubsidized job</li> <li>• Optional: CPR/First-Aid training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational training models with relevant industry certifications</li> <li>• CPR/First-Aid training - <i>required</i></li> </ul>

<b>Supporting Returning Participants</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider Peer Leadership opportunities to support growth opportunities that involve increased independence, and/or stronger alignment to career interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support returning participants with marketable skills and increased opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support returning participants with marketable skills and increased opportunity</li> <li>• Support returning participants with growth opportunities that involve increased leadership – consider peer mentorship opportunities within YW programming</li> </ul>
<b>Mentorship</b>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship via professionals in field of interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured, career specific, mentorship</li> </ul>
<b>Optional</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional: design Micro Career Pathway comparable courses that align with WIOA adult training</li> <li>• Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage.</li> </ul>
<b>Tiers 2-4</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview practice – engaging in Talk Hiring platform – and individual personal branding focused on skills, interests, and assets</li> </ul>			



The following chart outlines the required elements for all participants across all tiers, while at the same time providing a detailed description of what each part involved in the support of the youths provide.

Programmatic Element	What does CommCorp provide?	What is the role of the grantee and local program providers?
<b>Signal Success Career Readiness</b>	<p>All online self-paced modules — so participants can develop career readiness on demand</p> <p>Design and provide facilitation training for regional <i>Signal Success</i> facilitators</p> <p>Provide guidance for the integration of learning between the in-person and virtual <i>Signal Success</i> modalities</p> <p>Provide curriculum in Spanish</p>	<p>Reinforce and encourage successful career development via case management</p> <p>Review participant progress and provide feedback to their self-paced work in addition to ensuring participants are meeting required Signal Success hours</p> <p>Facilitate live Signal Success curriculum within local programming</p> <p>Ensure the completion of Signal Success/career readiness hours as outlined in the RFP - <b>MNWB</b></p>
<b>Career Exploration</b>	<p>Organization and facilitation of statewide online Career Chats and Alumni Panels</p> <p>Support partnership building between private sector employers and local programming</p> <p>Provide, virtual, hands-on experience through Interplay Learning</p>	<p>Plan, create, and facilitate opportunities and events for participants to engage with professionals in careers of interest similar to Career Chats</p> <p>Engage participants in opportunities provided by CommCorp to increase opportunities of participants of career exploration</p>
	<p>Provide interview-skill-building sessions access to online mock</p>	

<b>Interview Preparation and Person Branding Coaching</b>	interviewing preparation tool and personal branding learning modules on personal branding	Organize live and/or virtual mock interviews and identify professionals willing to participate  Encourage participants to use Talk Hiring for mock interview practice connected to their field of interest
<b>Case Management</b>	Guiding tools, training, and regional support  Access to technology solutions to address communication and data collection challenges	Organize and conduct regular one-on-one and group check-ins to support success  Through case management, address barriers and provide referrals as needed
<b>Programmatic Element (Relevant Tier)</b>	<b>What does CommCorp provide?</b>	<b>What is the role of the grantee and local program providers?</b>
<b>Service- Based Learning (Tier One)</b>	Support on-going effective service learning projects  Common assessment tools to track outcomes	Building internal capacity or partnering with local Community Based Organizations or schools to structure and facilitate virtual, in-person, or hybrid service-learning projects
<b>Subsidized Work Placements (Mainly Tiers Three &amp; Four, some Tier Two)</b>	Common assessment tools to track outcomes  Guidance and regional support on employer engagement, how to structure virtual opportunities and tools for supporting alignment to safety protocols	Identifying, developing, and monitoring supportive placements that include mentoring - provided by an experienced individual in the field - and support for participants  In the case of shorter placements, aligning them to additional opportunities like Career Chats and Micro Career Pathway courses, when offered  Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan

<p><b>Sector-Aligned Project-Based Learning</b> (Mainly Tier One &amp; Two with some Tier Three)</p>	<p>Development of resources and tools to support age-and-stage-appropriate work and outcomes across the three tiers</p> <p>Coordination of cross-program peer gatherings</p> <p>Curriculum, toolkits and guides to facilitate programming</p>	<p>Facilitation of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) groups which should include regular, live whole-group and small- group Zoom sessions and in-person projects</p> <p>Recruitment and coordination with employer partners and professionals to serve as project advisors and when appropriate project “clients”</p>
<p><b>Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan</b> (Mainly Two with some Tier One &amp; Three – participants receiving, at least, 60 hours of subsidized work)</p>	<p>Integrated space in the YouthWorks database</p>	<p>Job description, list of skills, and feedback/reviews to participate</p> <p>Employer engagement orientation and support services that help employers understand the goals of the program and the needs of the participants.</p>
<p><b>Micro Career Pathway Courses</b> (Tiers Three &amp; Four)</p>	<p>Identify, vet, and coordinate asynchronous career pathway courses to provide alignment to in-demand fields</p> <p>Maximize utilization of state funds by negotiating group rates and offering access to courses without additional costs to local programs</p> <p>Whenever possible, support course alignment to LinkedIn skills assessments and other certifications to help participants build their online skill portfolios</p>	<p>Support enrollment based on interest and fit</p> <p>Work with training partners and participants to ensure the necessary technology and internet access is available</p> <p>Support attendance, participation, and completion by establishing stipends and incentives, providing encouragement, and removing barriers</p> <p>Align participant programs so career pathway courses connect to placements/PBLs</p> <p>Design Micro Career Pathway comparable courses that align with WIOA adult training</p>

		for participants ages 21 – 25 where applicable
<b>Peer Leaders</b> (Tiers Two, Three, & Four)	Provide training for recruiting, hiring, and training of peer leaders for your program	Provide opportunities for returning and/or older participants to practice leadership and project management skills, while also serving as peer mentors to younger participants - at least one peer leader for every 12 projected participants  Provide resources for additional professional development and trainings such as First Aid and CPR

## **Youth Eligibility**

Participation in a Metro North YouthWorks employment program is limited to residents of the 20 cities and towns of the Metro North region, who meet the four eligibility requirements: age, income, risk factors, and/or geographic residence.

- ***Age Requirements***

A participant is eligible to participate in the YouthWorks program if they are between the ages of 14 and 25, at least, sometime during the period of programming. A participant must be, at least, 14 at the start of programming. Partners are asked to make special efforts to recruit and serve Emerging Workforce participants who are disconnected from work and education. Participants are not required to be enrolled in a secondary school to be eligible for the YouthWorks program.

- ***Income Requirements***

In the 2024-2025 program year, a participant should have a family income that does not exceed the annual equivalent of 200% of the Federal poverty guidelines. The 2024 federal poverty guidelines (Attachment 1) are the most updated information at the time of this document’s release. Because free lunch has been implemented across the state, local program administrators should be prepared to request proof of status with self-attestation serving as a source.

**Note:** The MA law passed in August 2023 does not impact low-income status for program participants. The YouthWorks program definition of free/reduced lunch eligibility meeting the low-income definition is specific to eligibility under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch

Act (i.e., the federal eligibility for free/reduced lunch). States or localities that have whole school, whole State, etc. free lunch does not mean all such youth are considered low income. They would still need to meet Russell School Lunch Act eligibility to be considered low income using the free/reduced lunch criteria.

**Note:** For the purposes of YouthWorks programming “income” is defined as gross income. “Family” is defined as two or more individuals related by blood, marriage, or decree of court, who are living in a single residence, and are included in one or more of the following categories:

- A married couple and dependent children,
- A parent or guardian and dependent children, or
- A married couple.

**Note for sub-grantees relying primarily on youth self-attestation:** In this case, sub-grantees should follow procedures to statistically check whether such statements of income are accurate. The purpose of this check is to confirm the accuracy of the eligibility process, not necessarily to disqualify any individual who is included in the sampling. Income Eligibility Self-Attest Form (Attachment 4).

**Note:** *Youths who do not qualify under YouthWorks requirements should be referred to other youth programs including but not limited to Connecting Activities, WIOA Youth, and MassHire Metro North Career Centers.*

***Use the checklist below to verify income eligibility criteria for youth participants.***

**Note:** Income documentation is not required for youth who are documented as housing insecure, in foster care, or for youth with disabilities or special needs.

***Acceptable INCOME documentation***

- MassHealth card
- W2 FORM
- Tax return
- Pay stubs from employer (2 paystubs)
- Copy of authorization to receive SNAP through DTA
- Copy of authorization to receive TAFDC cash assistance through DTA
- Copy of authorization to receive EAEDC cash assistance through DTA
- Employer statement
- Housing authority verification
- Verification of homelessness such as letter from shelter or ID of shelter

- **Place of Residence**

The Metro North region consists of the following twenty cities and towns north of Boston: Arlington, Belmont, Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, Winthrop, and Woburn.

Applicants outside of our priority cities (Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Somerville, Revere, Malden, and Medford), but within other cities and towns north of Boston (Arlington, Belmont, Burlington, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, Winthrop, and Woburn), may also submit proposals to serve youth in the Metro North area.

Any youth residing in the Metro North region who meets the income and age eligibility guidelines may participate fully in the programming.

However, MNWB may make funding decisions to ensure services are targeted at the priority cities (Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Somerville, Revere, Malden, and Medford).

## **Participation and Completion Requirement**

All participants should be paid for work and training, including orientation, hours with grant funds.

### ***Participants enrolled in Cycle 1 Period (June 2024 – August 30, 2024)***

For a participant to be counted they must have engaged in at least 10 program hours. Participants may take part in programming for as little as four (4) weeks and as many as nine (9) weeks. Programs should be mindful of supporting participants with feasible schedules that offer opportunities for substantial skill gain without interfering with educational requirements for in-school youth including summer school.

For participants to be considered completers, they must complete at least 60 programmatic hours. Of these hours...

- Career readiness hours are based on participant engagement; however, in addition to *Signal Success* participants may engage in other career readiness activities:
  - Participants who engage in program activities in Cycle 1 only are expected to complete 15 total hours of career readiness training. Of those 15 hours, at least, 10 must be *Signal Success*. The remaining five (5) hours can be of career readiness activities relevant to the participants' tier.
- All participants must take part in at least one of the below:

Service Based Learning, Work Placement, Project Based Learning

### ***Participants enrolled in Cycle 2 Period (September 2, 2024 – June 30, 2025)***

For a participant to be counted they must have received at least 10 program hours. Participants can take part in programming for as little as nine (9) weeks. Programs need to be mindful to support participants with feasible schedules that offer opportunities for substantial skill gain without interfering with educational requirements for in-school participants. For example, a Tier 1 or 2 participant might benefit from a 10-week program with an average of five (5) hours a week while an older out-of-school participant in Tiers 3 or 4 may participate in all of Cycle 2 for an average of 15 hours a week or more.

For participants to be considered completers, they must complete at least 40 program hours. Of these hours:

- Participants who engage only in activities in Cycle 2 September through June period are expected to complete 25 total hours of career readiness training. Of those 25 hours, at least, 20 must be Signal Success. The remaining five (5) hours can be of career readiness activities relevant to the participants' tier.
- All participants must take part in at least one of the below:
  - Service Based Learning, Work Placement, Project Based Learning
  - or
  - Micro Career Pathway Courses

## **Utilization of Peer Leaders**

One of the most promising practices across the YouthWorks partner network is the strategic use of peer leaders. Peer leadership roles provide opportunities for returning and/or older participants to practice leadership and project management skills, while also serving as peer mentors to younger participants. All programs are strongly encouraged to recruit and support at least one peer leader for every 12 projected participants. The peer leaders can support some staff implementation tasks while also benefiting from the learning components of the program. The Commonwealth Corporation will provide materials for regions to support recruiting, hiring, and training of peer leaders. The June start date of programming has been incorporated into programming for regions onboard, provide support and guidance to Peer Leaders before the official kick-off of Cycle 1 in July.

### ***Participants enrolled between June 2024 (Peer Leaders) – June 30, 2025<sup>1</sup>***

For a participant to be counted they must have engaged in at least 10 program hours. Participants may take part in programming for as little as 10 weeks. Programs need to be mindful to support participants with feasible schedules that offer opportunities for substantial skill gain without interfering with educational requirements for in-school youth.

If a participant engages in program activities throughout the entire program year, they are expected to engage in a combined total of, at least, 30 hours of career

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<sup>1</sup> Participants who engage in both cycles can be counted in a region's target as two participants.

readiness programming over the course of the year. Of those 30 hours, at least, 25 must be *Signal Success*. The remaining five (5) hours can be of career readiness activities relevant to the participants’ tier.

**Note:** All participants are required to sign off on the “Participation Agreement” (Attachment 3) in the database and the “YouthWorks Participant Handbook” which should be provided to participants in hard copy or virtually. Both documents can be found in the YouthWorks Portal

**Note:** Recognizing not all programs operate at full capacity all year, we encourage programs to identify beginning and ending dates for cohort programming and provide details within their application

## **Sector-Aligned Project-Based Learning Offerings**

Project Based Learning (PBLs) is an instructional methodology encouraging participants to learn by applying the knowledge and skills acquired via programming to have an engaging learning experience through group project-based activities. Project Based Learning presents opportunities for deeper learning in-context and for the development of important skills tied to college and career readiness. The Project Based Learning activities are a required component of programming for all Youthworks contracted and sub-contracted sites.

Programs are encouraged to build off the PBL offerings and integrate local resources and partners into the programming. To maintain program quality and consistency, when facilitating Project Based Learning, sites are urged to do so in keeping with the four projects (below) and the corresponding content materials. Sites may use other sources of content material; however, content must be pre-approved by your designated regional support manager. PBLs should be conducted at a minimum once per program year. If you are offering multiple cohorts per grant year, then your program may want to incorporate, at least, two PBL activities to ensure more participation for youth. If possible, PBLs should be conducted in person and during school break(s) to allow for more participant engagement; support will be provided from MNWB and the Commonwealth Corporation. Staff training for PBL implementation and facilitation is available from the Commonwealth Corporation.

<b>Project Topic</b>	<b>Aligned Sectors</b>
1. Producing a Pro Social Media Plan to Help Where It’s Needed Most	Business, Management, & Administration Communications & Information Systems
2. Cultivating and Sharing Self-care and Wellness Practices That Work	Health Science Technology Human Services
3. Making an Impact through Entrepreneurship, Advocacy and Corporate Responsibility	Business, Management, & Administration Human Services
4. Developing classroom art, literature, or curriculum to support positive outcomes for younger learners	Communications & Information Systems Human Services



## **Micro-Career Pathway Courses (Statewide virtual offerings)**

In partnership with local learning institutions and organizations, Commonwealth Corporation will offer several micro-career pathway courses. Micro-Career Pathways Courses are to provide participants with an opportunity to learn about varied career sectors. Courses will be offered asynchronously during Cycle 2 of programming only. MNWB will notify sub-grantees once Micro-Career Pathway Courses have become available for registration. MNWB also encourages applicants to consider partnering with the MassHire Metro North Career Center to design Micro Career Pathway comparable courses that align with WIOA adult training for participants ages 21 – 25 where applicable.

**Local programs do not need to budget any tuition cost for these courses.**

**Regions are encouraged to include areas of interest for courses in their application.**

- Hours per course = 15
- Commonwealth Corporation does not direct programs' payment schedules. Program leads/staff determine when the best time is to pay their participants.
  - Best practice: upon course completion.
- Case Managers, etc. should periodically check the attendance screen on the database for attendance/course completion information.

## **Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan**

The Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan ([WBLLP](#)) is structured to provide depth to work-based learning experiences while creating an opportunity for participants and program coordinators to engage in discussion(s) related to short-term and long-term goals aligning with skill assessment and career exploration. School-aged participants engaging in 60 or more subsidized work hours should create a plan that would benefit the participant in the completion of resumes, job applications, and college applications.

## **Quality Hybrid and Virtual Service-Learning Projects**

Service-learning projects can offer younger participants foundational work skills through a substantive and well-structured work-based learning experience. Traditionally in-person, many of these projects can be translated to virtual or hybrid projects to prioritize safety alongside learning. Increased mentoring and support are essential components when structuring a service-learning project for implementation especially virtual and/ or hybrid projects.

**Best Practices for Service-Based Learning:**

- Develop clear and measurable learning outcomes for the project and relevant assessments to measure and record outcomes.

- Integrate key members of the local community into the process and project so that participants have a clear sense of purpose, audience, and impact.
- Adding accountability and a professional aspect to the learning by having students develop descriptions and then revisit these documents along with a work-based learning evaluation tool on a regular basis.
- Include ongoing and simple practices to gauge student perspectives by creating intentional spaces for participants to reflect and discuss their experience. Ensuring these activities occur in a range of modalities and settings will garner the most traction. For example, programs are likely to get different information in a whole group sharing session about highlights and challenges of the week than in a short, written feedback survey.
- Intentionally include ways for participants to change or expand their experience.
- Build in opportunities to regularly respond to case management needs. Whether it is part of a weekly staff meeting or the end of the day wrap-up text or email exchange, staff need time to respond to what they are observing. Especially in cases where participants are struggling or starting to disengage, early intervention is essential.

## **Online, Hybrid, and In-Person Placements**

Work-based learning is the foundation of the Early and Career Trajectory Experiences (Tier 2) and a key component across the other program tiers. These placements are designed to match participants with subsidized employment opportunities that foster transferable skills. Whether the placement is a participant's first job or an opportunity to build on previous work experience, YouthWorks subsidized placements are work-based learning opportunities with the rigor and authenticity of paid employment realities and responsibilities. While traditionally, these placements are conducted entirely in-person, many can translate into strong online and hybrid options.

### **Best Practices for Work-Based Learning Experiences:**

- Active employer engagement and workforce development focused on identifying and developing quality work placements.
- Clear and inclusive recruitment processes include assessing potential participants' interests and skills, and then utilizing this intake information to complete thoughtful job placement matches.
- Employer engagement orientation and support services that help employers understand the goals of the program and the needs of the participants.
- Agreement with employers about what types of tools and strategies will be used to promote accountability and support for remote or hybrid placements.

- Coordination with local Connecting Activities, WIOA, and Innovation Pathway programs to support an integrated approach to comprehensive career development for youth and young adults.

## **Effective and Systematic Career Readiness**

To promote employability skill development necessary to succeed in Massachusetts' evolving economy, all participants will take part in a career readiness component and a related career-readiness assessment.

**Required curriculum component:** To help facilitate a consistent and progressive YouthWorks experience, Commonwealth Corporation will provide access to all curricular materials for the four versions of Signal Success instruction:

- Signal Success: Starting off Strong
- Signal Success: Build a Professional Self
- Signal Success: Crafting a Career Path
- Signal Success: Emerging into Career and Career Management

The Signal Success curriculum has been developed in alignment with evidence-based benchmarks in youth career development and research on employer expectations and preferences in hiring teens and young adults. Skill development will be focused on areas identified by O\*Net data as key skill requirements of entry-level occupations—jobs in which teens have been typically employed.

**Note:** *All programs are expected to use the Signal Success curriculum created by the YouthWorks team at the Commonwealth Corporation.*

**Note:** *MNWB does not handle Signal Success curriculum. Sub-grantees who have not attended Signal Success training courses in the past, at least once, must attend one of the training workshops led by CommCorp staff.*

## **Commitment to Participant Wage, Safe and Appropriate Working Environments**

- All subsidized placements in the YouthWorks program must include an hourly wage no less than the Massachusetts minimum wage of \$15.00/hr. All hourly wages must align with the tiered wage ranges provided.
- Prior to the start of participants engaging at a worksite, site supervisors must provide a comprehensive orientation including but not limited to the use of safety equipment and any tools/equipment which will be used by participants.

- Programs must pay an hourly wage or provide a comparable stipend for participation in all programming components. Programs should make every effort to maximize the financial benefits offered to participants through wages, stipends, and appropriate program incentives.
- Whether participants are visiting a worksite for a few hours or are placed there for the whole program, all work sites must be safe and appropriate spaces for all program participants. Work sites that demonstrate bias against specific populations should not be considered for program participation. All programs must have clear and participant-friendly support policies to prevent harassment in the workplace and address any issues that may arise.
- Programs must ensure that all participants are provided with the necessary equipment and supplies needed to complete any assignments.
- Worksites should post Child Labor Laws, when appropriate, and ensure participants are aware of workers' rights.
- Worksites sponsored by faith-based organizations may not engage participants in activities that are religious in nature. For example, it is not appropriate for YouthWorks participants to be asked to teach religious studies.

**Note:** All participants taking part in traditional in-person placements or employer-structured work from home placements must have a valid work permit. Participants engaging in virtual career development programming or occupational training courses only do not need work permits because this programming constitutes a learning experience rather than a job.

## **Recruitment, Enrollment, Case Management**

Programs are encouraged to define recruitment processes that include assessing potential participants' fit for the program in terms of interests, skills, and ability to complete programming. Additionally, programs should think through how each of these components will be accomplished differently for virtual, in-person, and hybrid programming. Sharing information and conducting on-boarding sessions online in an interactive manner helps participants know what to expect and provides opportunities to address technology barriers in advance when planning virtual opportunities. After a participant has been accepted and enrolls into the program, local program supports should ensure participants have signed-off on the "Participation Agreement" in the database, acknowledging they understand what is required and expected of them as a participant of the YouthWorks program. During orientation, participants should be given a copy of the "Participant Guide" – this will be provided by MNWB staff; programs should identify a tracking system to indicate receipt of this document.

**Note:** If a participant declines signing off on the participant agreement, then they should not be allowed to move forward with the program.

It is essential to avoid imposing additional or exacerbating existing barriers, so all programs should plan to provide participants who need a device to access programming with a Chromebook or entry-level laptop for virtual and/or hybrid programming. Equipment purchases in previous years should be leveraged first. In many cases this may be a greater need among out-of-school participants. Finally, all programs need to identify additional modes of case management beyond email and voicemails if only operating in a virtual modality. Layering in text-based communication, dedicated live small group case management and team-based communication through tools like Slack and MS Teams increases engagement and persistence among participants because it provides multiple avenues to access support.

**Case Management:** Each contracted and sub-contracted site will be required to provide advocacy and support to program participants by conducting needs assessments, developing customized success plans, and monitoring and evaluating participant progress on a regular basis. In addition, each site will maintain an active list of resources and referrals to other wrap-around support services and networks that participants can access, when needed. This framework is designed to assist participants with successful completion of the YouthWorks program and will be referred to as Case Management.

Case Management should occur at the start of a program cycle and evaluated mid-program and at the end of programming. If program capacity allows, additional case management support is encouraged throughout a participant's engagement with the program. Programs are encouraged to keep a detailed log of communication between participant and program support especially indicating multiple efforts to communicate with a participant around subjects such as timesheet completion, completed program hours, additional program opportunities, etc.

Challenges that persist with participants should be shared with the YouthWorks team to identify a possible solution.

## **Reporting**

Partners will be required to periodically submit YouthWorks written reports to provide the Commonwealth Corporation and the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board detailed information on:

- Support needs within the Metro North region
- Youth participants engagement in Youthworks relevant program activities
- Impact of public investment in YouthWorks programs
- Curriculum structure and overall participants data – the MNWB needs to ensure partners are meeting contractual obligations.

The MassHire Metro North Workforce Board will be responsible for providing all partners access to the YouthWorks reports, as well as collecting all data from partners for submission through

the YouthWorks database. Dates for when reports are due for submission are established by the Commonwealth Corporation. It is the MNWB responsibility to ensure all partners have completed reports before the due date. And all partners are responsible and required to complete reports before the due date.

Sub-grantees are required to report individual YouthWorks participant record data, including social security numbers that will enable the state to develop program profiles, statistical reports on the characteristics of participating youth and employers, and calculate data on program wage levels as part of the process of reporting program outcomes to the Massachusetts Legislature. **Whether a program uses their own application process or not, every participant MUST have an application on file. The free, online application for participant completion will be provided in March by the Commonwealth Corporation or at the completion of the new system – whichever comes first. Additionally, all participant data should be reported to the Commonwealth Corporation within the system.**

**Please note:** The YouthWorks database is used to support YouthWorks program management and reporting to the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Legislature. Sub-grantees must record ONLY information about youth and young adults who are participating in YouthWorks programs. Information about participants in other (non-YouthWorks) programs must NOT be included in the database.

*The final invoice for the year will not be paid prior to being completed database submission.*

In addition to data entry, sub-grantees are required to complete short narrative reports. The format for these narrative reports will be provided to sub-grantees.

By collecting and reporting a more comprehensive set of data, the YouthWorks program will be able to report on a wider range of positive outcomes. Some examples are listed below:

- Participants have increased labor market participation in the two years following their YouthWorks program experience.
- Participants complete applicable core program components (Signal Success work readiness training, work placement, work-based learning experience, occupational training, etc.)
- Participants improve employability or soft skills.
- Participants demonstrate knowledge of careers and the education, training and skills required to progress through a chosen career path.
- Participants maintain high levels of workplace engagement.
- The program provides paid work experience to youth and young adults.
- Participants trajectory after the completion of the program.

**Reporting Periods**

Report	For Activities Conducted During This Period	Data Entry and Narrative Reports Due Dates
Report #1	June 1 <sup>st</sup> – July 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	August 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2024
Report #2	September 1 <sup>st</sup> – December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	January 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
Report #3	January 1 <sup>st</sup> – April 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	May 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
Final Report	Entire year	July 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2025

**Data Tracking**

Partners are required to track and upload all youth data to the YouthWorks database. It is a contractual obligation that all partners upload their youth data to the YouthWorks database and keep track of youth performance using the YouthWorks database.

To document the accomplishments of YouthWorks and build an even stronger program, it is important for all regions to augment their data collection and focus on reporting employment, education/training, and skill gain outcomes.

MNWB will be providing support to partners to ensure a smooth navigation and understanding of the YouthWorks database.

**YouthWorks Confidentiality Statement and Release Form**

Program operators must have all YouthWorks participants complete the Confidentiality Statement and Release Form (<https://commcorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/YouthWorks-Confidentiality-Statement-and-Release-Form.pdf>) to ensure that participants have signed off on the release of participant record data including social security numbers.

**Youth Engagement & Opportunities**

The MassHire Metro North Workforce Board anticipates YouthWorks partners to offer project-based learning and career pathway opportunities to youth participants. Partners are encouraged to strategically plan and offer a diverse array of work and learning experiences tailored to the interests and needs of YouthWorks program participants. The aim is to go beyond just providing a paycheck and ensure that the youth gain meaningful and impactful experiences, fostering the development of essential job skills and workplace readiness necessary for success in their future careers.

**Note:** Please refer to the Tiers table to identify which tiers are project-based learning focus and which are work based focus.

## **Expanding Partnership and Employer Engagement**

As we continue to expand the YouthWorks program by establishing and fostering partnerships, networks, and relationships with businesses within the region and throughout the state, it is anticipated that partners will also intensify their efforts in expanding partnerships, specifically, in the private sector.

Heading into the 2024-2025 program year, with a continued emphasis on the growth of older participants, it is expected that partners will actively engage employers whose missions align with the YouthWorks program. *Partners will be tasked with expanding employer recruitment to align with high-growth career pathways and industries outlined in Regional Blueprints and identified as priorities by the Healey-Driscoll Administration, including life sciences, healthcare and human services, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing.*

Building on the recommendations of the Climate Chief and the Governor’s Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience, as a region, we are urged to involve partners/employers offering opportunities in clean energy, climate, and resiliency. The application will require information on employer partnerships and a breakdown of sites by industry or sector. The Administration will report on YouthWorks programming across industries, with a specific interest in showcasing YouthWorks employment placements in climate, clean energy, and resiliency.

Applicants must provide an outline on how they plan to sustain or expand programming in subsequent YouthWorks employment and training programs.

Programs should carefully consider the target population and identify the strongest skill sets required to explore specific topics and establish connections to academic interests (e.g., climate and clean energy, language arts, numeracy, STEM). The proposed program model should strategically pair Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 to ensure a subset of YouthWorks participants can undergo a sustained and progressively sequenced set of work and learning experiences.

**Note:** Sub-contracting partnerships or worksites under contracted ARPA dollars cannot include lobbying organizations (501(c)4s) or cannabis companies.

**Note:** *Priority will be granted for applications that propose the leverage of private sector placements to expand YouthWorks services.*

## **Documenting YouthWorks Outcomes**

To document the accomplishments of YouthWorks and build an even stronger program, it is important for all regions to continue to augment their data collection and focus on reporting employment, education/training, and skill gain outcomes. The table below indicates the



required data points and data collection tools and outlines which tools and outcomes are required of various programmatic components and approaches.

**Table: Data Points/Tools**

Required Across all Tiers and Approached	
Participant Social Security Numbers (Commonwealth Corporation conducts wage record match)	
Participant-level demographic information, wage/stipend, and hours of core program services	
End of program survey (paper and online versions available)	
Participant Case Study questionnaire (to be completed with a small strategic sub-set)	
Participant end of program plans (return to programming, enter workforce, hired by worksite, enter education)	
<i>Signal Success</i> Competency-Based Portfolio	
Worksite of participant (when applicable)	
Program Connection Analysis Protocol (tracks progression to WIOA and ConnectingActivities) <sup>2</sup>	
Additional Requirement by Program Element	
Service-Learning Project	Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan
Work Placement	Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan
Sector-Aligned Project-Based Learning Intensives	Project Performance Assessment, deliverable, and self-reflection
Micro-Career Pathway Courses	Course completion status and LinkedIn Skill Assessment results, when applicable

It is important that the YouhtWorks database is updated on a regular basis, and that all information recorded is in alignment with the required data components.

## **Program Expenditures**

**Focus on Participant Wage:** Across the full budget of the grant, at least, 60% of overall funding must be spent on youth wages, stipends, and support services. While the other 40% should be spent towards salaries and related personnel costs of outreach, counseling, instructional and job site supervisory staff. Participants salaries have a fixed 14% fringe.

- **Note:** Budgets submitted should include stipends/wages within the approved wage range (**See page Tier Breakdown on page 4 and YouthWorks Guidance on Stipends and**

<sup>2</sup> Programs are asked to share additional services, like WIOA and Connecting Activities, they connect participants to as a wraparound service. You will also be asked to indicate, to the best of your knowledge, whether a participant engaged in those opportunities.

**Incentives Attachment 5).** Programs expecting to provide stipends/wages higher than the approved wage through match, should incorporate that information in their match report not application budget narrative.

- **Note:** For the purposes of ARPA dollars, the definition of equipment is “tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000.”
  - Acquisition of equipment with a unite or aggregate cost of \$5,000 or more must be approved in writing by CommCorp prior to purchase.

Allowable Expense	Placement in Budget	
	Program Admin	Participant Specific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clothing/uniforms for vocational programming/employment</li> <li>• Trainings</li> <li>• Transportation for youth participants</li> <li>• Bus/train passes</li> <li>• Van/bus rental</li> <li>• Vocational, or supplemental career readiness materials including certification materials and testing fees</li> <li>• Driver’s Education and License fees</li> <li>• Food for youth participants</li> <li>• Gift cards or other financial incentives (such as bonuses) for youth are permissible to a <u>maximum of \$350 per youth</u> for the duration of the grant period if they are tied to program milestones and do not occur in any single increment greater than \$100.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For their participation in Commonwealth Corporation facilitated events, participants may receive additional incentives that will not count towards their \$350</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Experiences (such as tickets to local events) not to exceed the \$350 per youth limit</li> </ul> <p>In some cases, GED or HiSET testing fees and driver’s licenses/state identification may be expended with prior approval from Commonwealth Corporation</p>	NOT ALLOWABLE	Support Services

Electronic devices such as laptops, webcams, and Chromebooks and internet access support services	Equipment Purchases – for general office usage	Equipment Purchases – for Program specific equipment
Certificates and credentialing opportunities for participants	NOT ALLOWABLE	Youth Participant Tuition and Fees
Computer software	Office Supplies	Office Supplies – with written consent from the CommCorp Youthworks staff
Equipment rental	Equipment Rental and Leasing	NOT ALLOWABLE
Cell phone reimbursement for the program staff persons serving YouthWorks participants	Telephone and Communications	NOT ALLOWABLE
Youth and employer outreach materials	Publications/Printing/Copying – if hard copy of materials  Marketing and Advertising (if soft copy of materials)	NOT ALLOWABLE
Mileage for program staff (for the YouthWorks grant) in relation to services rendered under the YouthWorks grant. Reimbursement will be provided for mileage only (at the current reimbursement rate of the grantee’s fiscal agent)	Mileage	NOT ALLOWABLE
Staff expenses related to YouthWorks provided trainings, gatherings, and convenings	As appropriate one of the following: Mileage, Meal Reimbursement, Parking/Tolls/Taxi, Meetings and Events	NOT ALLOWABLE
In some cases, GED or HiSET testing fees and driver’s licenses/state identification may be	TBD on a case-by-case basis	NOT ALLOWABLE

expended with prior approval from Commonwealth Corporation		
Salaries and related personnel costs of outreach, counseling, instructional and job site supervisory staff	Program Staff Salaries – calculated on Budget Detail Tab	NOT ALLOWABLE
Other costs directly related to the program	At your discretion or seek guidance from the CommCorp Youthworks Staff	At your discretion or seek guidance from the CommCorp Youthworks Staff

A maximum of 40% of the total funds may be spent on the following:

- Salaries and related personnel costs of outreach, counseling, instructional and job site supervisory staff
- Other Admin specific costs as outlined in the budget template and in the chart above.
- **Note:** No funds provided under this program may be used to support the salaries of existing permanent staff at any agency or facility at which youth are employed other than for that portion of their time which these staff spend supervising youth who are assigned directly to them; all such time allocations must be fully documented and are subject to approval by MNWB and the Commonwealth Corporation

**Indirect Rates:**

Programs may use up to 10% of their total approved budget toward indirect costs.

**Additional Guidelines:**

YouthWorks grantees’ approved line-item grant budget will reflect the guidelines listed below. All line items must be described in the budget narrative worksheets in the budget template. MNWB kindly asks all sub-grantees that any expenses outside and/or more than the following guidelines are notified to our staff as we need to request approval from the Commonwealth Corporation. Failure to obtain prior approval from Commonwealth Corporation for expenses outside and/or more than these guidelines may result in non-payment from Commonwealth Corporation as the funder.

**Non-allowable** expenses include:

- Staff bonuses, incentives and/or gifts

- Equipment (defined as any item of tangible personal property having a per-unit cost greater than \$5,000 and a useful economic life of more than three years). Property purchased with grant funds and used for grant purposes that does not meet the definition of 'equipment' would fall into the budget category of supplies and materials
- Indirect costs that exceed 10% of the total budget
- Mileage reimbursement not related to the YouthWorks grant
- Any expenses more than the contracted grant amount or outside the contracted grant period
- Any expenses outside of the approved budget

**Note:** please be aware that CPR/First aid training is required for the Emerging Workforce Tier 4. Therefore, programs who intend to facilitate Emerging Workforce programming must plan to include CPR/First aid training expenses within their budget keeping in mind the 40% vs 60% expenditure requirement.

## **Financial Match Expectations**

Based on the awarded contract amount, grantees are assigned regional private sector match targets of, at least 10%, cash match for program expenditures. To be considered, match must come from private sector commitments – additional wages for participants – and not from other public funds that may be used to support the program. Match can be documented as paid placements in any brokered youth employment programs including Connecting Activities.

It is an expectation by the Commonwealth that a private sector match equal to 10% of the approved budget for the YouthWorks program is made. The match can be achieved through grants made by private-sector employers to the workforce region or through private-sector wages paid to youth who are eligible for YouthWorks. Private-sector employers includes private-sector enterprises and private nonprofit organizations such as private hospitals, colleges, universities, and others.

*For city funded mayoral programs, city-funded programs would not be considered a match contribution.*

**Note:** Budgets submitted should include stipends/wages within the approved wage range. Programs expecting to provide stipends/wages higher than the approved wage through match, should incorporate that information in their match report not application budget narrative.

## **Period of Performance**

The contracts for programs that submit complete applications in a timely manner will be issued with a period of performance of May 15, 2024, through June 30, 2025. Expenditures charged to

the grant must be for program activity and services rendered during this period. All such contracted funds must be expended by June 30, 2025. Funds unexpended after that date will revert to the Commonwealth.

## **MNWB Expectations for Sub-grantees**

- Monthly submission of invoices during programming;
- monthly submission of back-up documentation reconciling cash requests and invoice amounts;
- regular data entry as outlined above during active performance periods;
- complete and accurate reporting of participants – All YouthWorks participants must report social security numbers for evaluation purposes. ***Additionally, for a participant to be counted they must have received at least 10 program hours. These 10 hours can be any combination of work hours and Signal Success workshops;***
- engage and maintain new partnerships in various career fields;
- engage new partnerships within the private sector
- engage participants in Commonwealth Corporation programming including but not limited to participants engaging in, at least, one Career Chat;
- recruit and make best efforts to retain participants;
- attend virtual, regional, and local meetings;
- support the organizing of regional site visits by MNWB and the Commonwealth Corporation;
- timely contract closeout – submission of final invoices and reports; and
- complete reporting of local program leverage – *the YouthWorks database asks sub-grantees to report whether a YouthWorks participant is co-enrolled in certain other programs, including WIOA Title I Youth, Connecting Activities, and others. Sub-grantees must ensure the full reporting of program leverage information.*

***Please note that final invoices will not be paid by CommCorp prior to being completed database submission. Therefore, MNWB will not be able to do cash reimbursement to sub-grantees that do not complete database updates.***

## **Cash Requests/Invoices**

- Payments under this contract are on a cost-reimbursement basis.

- All payments to the Contractor are contingent upon receiving funds from the Commonwealth Corporation.
- The Contractor shall submit requests for reimbursement on a monthly basis.
- MNWB reserves the right to modify the payment schedule should situations arise, or changes are made by the funder that warrant such modification.
- All invoices that include staff costs must be accompanied by relevant backup documentation verifying disbursement of funds and staff charges to the funds covered under this contract.
- MNWB will commence the payment process upon receipt of complete and accurate invoices. Missing and/or incomplete invoices will delay the payment process.
- Payment to the Contractor will be made within 30 days of receiving complete and accurate invoices.
- MNWB will accept requests for reimbursement from the President/CEO/Executive Director of the Contractor or an authorized fiscal representative.

## **MNWB Sub-grantees Application & Evaluation Process**

All organizations and institutions interested in participating as a Metro North YouthWorks partner, for the upcoming year 2024-25, must submit their RFP proposal by **March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 5:00pm ET**. To submit RFP proposals, please also email [rfp@masshiremetronorth.org](mailto:rfp@masshiremetronorth.org) with the words “**YouthWorks RFP**” inserted in the subject line. Once the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board has received and reviewed all proposals, **applicants will be contacted with the following steps.**

**Once interested partners submit their RFP proposals by March 15<sup>th</sup>**, and get confirmation for next steps, the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board will proceed to complete the Comm Corp RFP application on behalf of our Metro North region partners to receive program funds. If any additional information is required by the Commonwealth Corporation, MNWB will be in contact with applicants to obtain additional information.

Evaluation will be based on the proposed program services, recruitment and eligibility processes, case management, employer partnerships, staffing plan, budget, data management and other program supports. MNWB must submit its final application on behalf of the Metro North region to the Commonwealth Corporation by March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## **Application & Evaluation Process Timeline:**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Documents</b>
Friday, February 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	MNWB RFP Release
Thursday, February 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Q&A Webinar/Bidder’s Conference YW 24-25
Friday, February 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Questions due
Monday, February 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Letters of Intent Due
Friday, March 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	RFP Submission due
(Anticipated) Wednesday, March 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Provider Application Status notification
Monday, March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	MWNB submits region wide response with selected partners
(Anticipated) Wednesday, April 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Application Status notification from the Commonwealth Corporation
(Anticipated) Wednesday, May 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Contract starts
(Anticipated) June 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Contract ends

## **Required Application Contents**

1. Application and Program Plan Summary (Section E of this RFP)
2. Program Budget and Narrative (available at <https://masshiremetronorth.org/about/funding-opportunities/>)

## **RFP Inquires, Questions and Answers**

The primary mode of communication between the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board and potential bidders will occur via <https://masshiremetronorth.org/about/funding-opportunities/>. Questions and Answers and any RFP amendments will be posted on the website. It is the bidder’s responsibility to check the website page frequently to stay apprised throughout the process.

MNWB Staff members are unable to provide technical assistance during the application process. Please do not contact staff directly with any questions. All questions pertaining to the RFP must be received in writing via email at RFP@masshiremetronorth.org. Please include **“YouthWorks RFP”** in the subject line. Only those questions directed to this email will be answered. All questions must be received by February 16, 2024. Questions will not be answered over the phone or in person.



## **Bidder's Conference**

MNWB will host a Bidder's Conference, via webinar, for all prospective respondents to this RFP. At this session MNWB staff will review program information, key proposal requirements, contract terms and conditions and respond to questions.

**The Bidder's Conference will be held:**

**February 15, 2023**

**2:00 PM – 3:30 PM**

**Via Webinar**

A brief period will be reserved at the Bidder's Conference for additional questions to be submitted in writing. Every effort will be made at the conference to answer questions submitted that day; however, all questions will be answered and posted on the website. No answers are final until posted on the website.

To register for Bidder's Conference please email MNWB at [RFP@masshiremetronorth.org](mailto:RFP@masshiremetronorth.org) with the name, job title, organization, e-mail address, and phone number for each individual attending the webinar. Please include "YOUTHWORKS BIDDER'S CONFERENCE" in the subject line. Attendance at the bidder's conference is recommended but not required.

## **Letter of Intent**

Please submit a letter of intent (Attachment 2) to the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board by 4:00 pm EST on March 3, 2024, to [RFP@masshiremetronorth.org](mailto:RFP@masshiremetronorth.org). Submission of a letter of intent is required. A bidder that fails to submit a letter of intent will not be considered.

## **Available Funding**

Commonwealth Corporation anticipates awarding \$19,912,757.00 in total funding across the state for this competitive process through ARPA funds. Funding awarded will be for the use of the entire fiscal year (Cycles 1 and 2), inclusive of planning, outreach, recruitment, enrollment, and delivery of program activities beginning May 15, 2024. Cycle 1 programming will take place June 2024 – August 30, 2024, with Cycle 2 beginning September 2, 2024 – June 30, 2025. Please note, the June programming start date is in support of training for Peer Leaders and hiring of supporting program staff. Funding will support placements and programming that take place virtually, in-person or hybrid which will be decided by regions.

## List of additional Program Resources

**Connecting Activities (CA):** YouthWorks is committed to making intentional connections with the statewide Connecting Activities program (CA). Connecting Activities funds pay for staff to recruit employers; prepare and place students in work-based learning opportunities such as YouthWorks; and structure those experiences using the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan. Information about Connecting Activities is available at <http://www.massconnecting.org/>. Suggestions for aligning YouthWorks and Connecting Activities include the following:

1. Work with CA staff in local high schools to provide outreach information about YouthWorks programming.
2. Find out what students in local YW/CA high schools are at risk of dropping out, becoming homeless, or in DYS or DCF custody. Ensure that that school student-support staff have YW enrollment materials.
3. Where feasible, support the transition of YW participants into CA school programming so that schools can be deliberate about capturing program experiences in college and career planning.

Program	Description and Applicable Links
<b>WIOA Title I Youth services.</b>	The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) youth program provides a wide variety of services, including subsidized jobs, for eligible low-income teens and young adults. YouthWorks youth are not required to be enrolled in WIOA. However, YouthWorks grantees may find significant value in supplementing the YouthWorks program with additional ‘wrap-around’ services funded by WIOA.
<b>WIOA Title I Adult services</b>	WIOA adult programs at the MassHire Career Centers may provide excellent supplemental services to youth employed under a YouthWorks grant. Local grantees may encourage youth who are at least 18 years of age to be enrolled as a MassHire Career Center member and provided with services to complement a YouthWorks program experience.  Link: <a href="#">MassHire Career Centers   Mass.gov</a>
<b>Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI)</b>	SSYI is a program administered by the Executive Office and Health and Human Services and is operated in 14 cities. The program model offers intensive outreach, case management, trauma supports and behavioral health services, education, employability, and employment services to 17–24-year-old proven risk young adults. Local grantees may co-enroll youth who have been engaged in SSYI services, have a reduced risk level and are ready for a subsidized placement or career pathway program experience.  Link: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/office-of-children-youth-and-family-programs">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/office-of-children-youth-and-family-programs</a>

<b>DTA/ TAFDC Teen Parenting Program (TPP).</b>	<p>A statewide network of TPPs are funded by DTA and are procured and administered by DCF. The goal of the TPP is to provide teen parents and their children a safe place to reside where they can gain the skills and knowledge necessary to become competent parents and lead productive, independent lives. YouthWorks partners should consider partnering with TPP's to extend services and establish referral relationships. Additionally, TPP's may be suitable places to complete the cohort-based work readiness workshops for these participants.</p> <p>Link: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/choose-a-tafdc-pathways-to-work-program">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/choose-a-tafdc-pathways-to-work-program</a>.</p>
<b>MRC Pre-Employment Transition Services.</b>	<p>Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) supports students with disabilities ages 14-22 by providing relevant job readiness services such as job exploration counseling, work readiness training, work-based learning experiences, counseling in post-secondary education and self-advocacy. Connecting with MRC/Pre-ETS community providers can lead to solid referrals of eligible students who would benefit from the YouthWorks program and who are receiving additional supportive services that support successful outcomes in youth employment programming.</p> <p>Link: <a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/pre-employment-transition-services-pre-ets-0">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/pre-employment-transition-services-pre-ets-0</a></p>

## E. APPLICATION AND PROGRAM PLAN SUMMARY:

### 2024-2025 Application and Program Plan Summary

For each question, please provide details of programming as it relates to each cycle. If information varies from one cycle to the next, please indicate that in your response. If an additional table is needed to distinguish cycles, copy, and paste an additional table for use and label it to indicate the programming cycle; if the additional table is not needed, delete, or skip it.

1. **Recruitment (10 Points):** Should include a defined recruitment process for participants.
  - a. Provide details about the overall recruitment efforts of the region.

CYCLE 1	Tier	Recruitment strategy of participants	Will you recruit new partners to specifically place/support participants in this Tier	Placement strategy	Projected number of enrollments in age group	Number of Peer Leaders
	Tier 1					
	Tier 2					
	Tier 3					
	Tier 4					
CYCLE 2						
	Tier 1					
	Tier 2					
	Tier 3					
	Tier 4					

**Note:** Programs are encouraged to maintain a 1 to 12 ratio – one Peer Leader for every 12 participants.

- b. How will **eligibility determination be conducted?**
2. **Program Overview (10 Points):** Should include / describe a model of strategic pairing of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 for the purposes of a sustained and progressively sequenced set of

work and learning experiences with an assessment plan to evaluate learning and skill gain aligned with programmatic goals.

**Cycle 1:**

Name of Program	Name of Organization Operating the Program	Brief Description of Model	Goal of Programming

**Cycle 2:**

Name of Program	Name of Organization Operating the Program	Brief Description of Model	Goal of Programming

3. **Program Design (30 Points):** Should include a strategic blending of work-related experiences and an outline of career exploration activities that rationalizes prioritization.

**Note:** Dates indicated in the chart below will tell readers if the programming takes place in Cycle 1 or Cycle 2.

- a. Provide a description of the approach and format of the career pathway component.
  - i. Provide a description of any additional career exploration activities (job shadowing, career panels, informational interviews, career mentoring, industry events, etc.).
  - ii. What industries and careers will be the focus?
  - iii. What credentials, if any, will be offered to participants?
  - iv. Provide a brief description of *Signal Success* delivery. Will the delivery of workshops consist of weekly workshops, bi-weekly workshops, or week-long workshops? Who will deliver workshops?

Planned Credentials/Certificates Offered	Service- Learning Project	Subsidized work placement	Sector- aligned, Project Based Learning (See page 20)	Micro Career Pathway Courses
Tier 1				
Tier 2				
Tier 3				
Tier 4				

**The Service and Project-Based Learning Tier (Tier 1):**

1. (If applicable) Please discuss how these placements will be different from subsidized placements for older youth. How were employers identified for this tier of services? What is the range of industries and careers that participants will learn about?
2. Provide details about the orientation participants will receive.
3. (If applicable) Provide details about any service-learning models that your program intends to offer. Please discuss how the program will be structured and include information about the project or projects that youth will complete. What skills will the participants learn? How will the program be structured to include assessment and growth? How will the project connect with specific careers?
4. In what ways will this program foster stronger career awareness and career exploration?
5. If any, which project-based learning offerings will be included for this tier? See page 20.

**The Early and Career Trajectory Experience Tier (Tier 2):**

1. Provide details about the orientation participants will receive.
2. Do you provide returning participants with progressively challenging placements? If so, please describe your approach.
3. How does your programming provide mentorship opportunities for working professionals?

4. If any, which project-based learning offerings will be included for this tier? See page 17.
5. Will micro career pathway courses be included for this tier?

**The Career Pathway Training and Support Tier (Tier 3):**

1. What additional program components will you align to these offerings to develop a more comprehensive career pathway approach?

**The Career Pathway Credentialing and Certifications Tier (Tier 4):**

1. What are the start and end dates of this cohort?
2. What additional program components will you align to these offerings to develop a more comprehensive career pathway approach?
3. What career pathway(s) will be offered?
4. How will career specific mentorship be provided?
5. Which, if any, of the partnering organizations/businesses are looking to hire participants at the completion of the program?
6. How will you support participants in the identification of a part-time or full-time position or educational opportunity at the completion of the program?
7. Detail how the case management will be similar and distinct from the case management approach used in other tiers of the program.

4. **Case Management (10 Points):** Should support participants in attaining work experience, credentials and/or certifications that enhance their marketability while outlining wrap-around services available for participants.
  - a. Detail your case management approach and be sure to indicate what tools and strategies you will use to connect with participants remotely as well as which services will be in-person for all tiers indicating the difference of depth in support.
  - b. Detail the **support services** that you plan to provide to participants.
5. **Employer and Partnership Outreach (15 Points):** Should take participant recruitment into consideration and include worksites that align with participant fit, interests, skills, and workforce data in the region.
  - a. If applicable, provide a list of employers who will serve as a worksite and/or service-learning experience site. *Please emphasize employers and sites that are focused on climate, clean energy, or resiliency jobs.*

Employer	Region	Industry	Sector

Industry should indicate types such as communication, technology, communications, etc. Sector should indicate non-profit, for-profit, or private sector.

**6. Budget and Budget Narrative (15 Points):** Complete the project budget template spreadsheet.

- a. On separate Budget Narrative, Partner worksheets provide line-item budget and budget narrative detail for Cycle 1 (May 15, 2024 (start of contracting) – August 30, 2024) and Cycle 2 (September 2, 2024 – June 30, 2025) periods.
- b. **Please use the budget template to indicate your projected spending.** Budget template such mirror budget narrative. MNWB will work with Commonwealth Corporation to review program plans and budgets to support the expanding of capacity.

**NOTE:** Please do not include Unemployment Insurance in the line item on the YouthWorks budget form called “Fringe for youth work experience.” In addition, please indicate in the YouthWorks budget narrative, what your youth fringe rate (14%) includes (e.g., FICA, Workers Compensation, tax withholding, etc.).

**7. Program Operations and Administration (10 Points)**

- a. Describe your process for **program monitoring** including workshop and worksite reviews, and fiscal monitoring of operators and subcontractors.
- b. Describe basic **payroll procedures**.
- c. Describe your process for **calculating the income of a household** for a participant. Is it income based on gross or net income? Would this be different across partnerships?
- d. Describe procedures and protocols in place for **ensuring data security and confidentiality** (hard copy files and electronic storage).
- e. How will the flow of information be managed and documented such that youth eligibility will be determined in advance of the projected start date for participation? *If you plan to have program partners operating distinct programs, please answer this question for each organization/program.*

**7a. Staffing Plan** - Complete the chart below. Include the information of your fiscal personnel.



<b>Staff Name and Title</b> (for staff not yet hired, please provide title)	<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Main responsibilities for this grant. If providing participant support, include Tier</b>	<b>Anticipated date of hire.</b>	<b>Onboarding support needed by Commonwealth Corporation</b>

# Attachment 1

## 2024 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous United States

Family Size	Annual Income		Monthly Income	
	Poverty Level	200% Poverty Level	Poverty Level	200% Poverty Level
1	\$15,060	\$30,120	\$1,255	\$2,510.00
2	\$20,440	\$40,880	\$1,703.33	\$3,406.67
3	\$25,820	\$51,640	\$2,151.67	\$4,303.33
4	\$31,200	\$62,400	\$2,600	\$5,200
5	\$36,580	\$73,160	\$3,048.33	\$6,096.67
6	\$41,960	\$83,920	\$3,496.67	\$6,993.33
7	\$47,340	\$94,680	\$3,945	\$7,890
8	\$52,720	\$105,440	\$4,393.33	\$8,786.67
Each additional family member:	\$5,380	\$10,760	\$448.33	\$896.67

**Note:** Poverty guidelines are updated periodically in the *Federal Register* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the authority of 42 U.S.C. § 9902(2). The guidelines for 2024 went into effect as of January 12, 2023. The Federal Register notice was published January 17, 2024 and can be viewed at : [Federal Register :: Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines](#)

# Attachment 2

## Letter of Intent to Bid on Metro North YouthWorks Request for Proposals

Submit this letter to the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board by 4:00pm EST on March 3, 2024, to [RFP@masshiremetronorth.org](mailto:RFP@masshiremetronorth.org). **Submission of a letter of intent is mandatory for a proposal to be considered.**

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitting for (Please Check):

\_\_\_\_ **Tier 1: Service and Project-Based Learning**

\_\_\_\_ **Tier 2: Early and Career-Trajectory Experience**

\_\_\_\_ **Tier 3: Career Pathway Training and Support**

\_\_\_\_ **Tier 4: Career Pathway Credentialing and Certifications**

Name of Lead Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Collaborating Organizations (if any):

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_



### Attachment 3

#### YouthWorks Participation Agreement Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that I have been accepted to participate in the  
(Participant's name)  
YouthWorks program with \_\_\_\_\_ beginning \_\_\_\_\_ ending \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Name of organization)

I understand I am expected to complete \_\_\_\_ hours of engagement in the program. I agree to  
(Program hours)  
maintain open and responsive communication via email, voicemails, and other program  
approved methods of communication.

As a part of my commitment and participation in Tier \_\_\_\_ of this program, I acknowledge  
that I will be expected to engage in the following elements of the program:

1. Complete career readiness and *Signal Success* hours
2. Participate in group projects.
3. Agree to participate in opportunities to meet expectations of program requirements  
such as:
  - a. Career Chats
  - b. Micro-career Pathway courses
4. Communicate challenges, when expected to be late to the worksite, and/or when in  
need of time off.
5. Attend and engage in:
  - a. Worksites
  - b. Workshops
  - c. Case management meetings
6. Submit timesheets in a timely manner.

I understand that failure to meet the expectations of the program may result in not being  
paid for uncompleted work and/or possible termination from the program.

-----  
Participant's Name

-----  
Date

## Attachment 4

# YouthWorks

### Income Eligibility Self-Attestation Form

Applicant Name:

-----

Address:

-----

I certify that I and my household meet the income eligibility guidelines for the YouthWorks Program. Complete section A or B to provide support for this statement.

I certify that I meet the eligibility guidelines of the YouthWorks Program, as an individual who identifies with one of the following categories and can provide documentation (if required):

Identify as a LGBTQIA+ community (no documentation required)

Limited English Language fluency

Court-involved youth (juvenile arrest, gang-involved, probation, DYS, CRA)

Foster Youth (DCF)

Former foster care youth (DCF)

Teen Parent

Currently homeless or runaway youth

Child of a single, working parent

Individual with a disability

# Attachment 5

## YouthWorks Guidance on Stipends and Incentives

A **stipend** payment is given to people who are participating in an internship, project-based learning opportunity, apprenticeship, or a fellowship, and represents a payment to help the recipient defray living expenses. **A stipend is typically not based on the number of hours worked in a week, but rather on a prearranged set of factors regarding the type and amount of work that is expected to be completed in a period.** It represents a payment that enables somebody to be exempt from waged or salaried employment to undertake a role that is normally unpaid.

- ✓ Program staff are responsible for documenting the project assignments and successful completion of project/ learning program components.
- ✓ Program staff may assign youth to classes, learning sessions and/ or workshops for completion for a stipend to be awarded.
- ✓ If the participants are not employees, the program will **not** be responsible for social security taxes, nor any payroll withholdings.<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ Often programs will not use payroll to manage this system as there is no tax responsibility.
- ✓ The program WILL issue a 1099 MISC to the student/ young person at year-end tracking payments made. A 1099 MISC should be issued for any stipend above \$600 annually.
- ✓ Students and sites are encouraged to seek tax advice regarding the 1099 MISC and student income tax, specifically the student's eligibility for the earned income tax credit.
- ✓ When programs offer a stipend as part of learning program, the student/ young person is not an employee and therefore will not be eligible for worker's compensation insurance coverage; instead, programs should be sure to have a clear student/intern accident policy.<sup>4</sup>

**Incentives** are often used by youth programs to encourage certain behavior by program participants – a \$50 gift card in exchange for good attendance; a ticket to an amusement park to recognize program completion; \$100 gift card for completing a diploma or job certification.

- ✓ Incentives are not wages, since they do not represent the value transferred in exchange for services performed within an employer-employee relationship.
- ✓ Use of incentives should be tracked by the youth-serving program with documentation on the type of incentive, amount of incentive, and program recipient name.
- ✓ If the amount of the gift cards alone or the gift cards combined with the stipends exceeds \$600 annually, the value of the gift cards also need to be documented in the 1099 MISC.

<sup>3</sup> The SS-8 form from the IRS allows organizations or workers a formal process for establishing payments that are not subject to employment taxes and income tax withholding. To access the form: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fss8.pdf> and to view a completed sample: <https://tinyurl.com/y2o7mcyc>

<sup>4</sup> All YouthWorks participants who have actual placements (in-person and virtual) must receive a wage, have a work permit (if under 18), and be covered by the employer of record's worker's compensation policy. Also, programs may not ask youth or their parents to waive their rights to worker's compensation benefits.