

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, April 27, 2016

Contact: Tyler Lowry, Franklin County Commissioners, 614/525-6630

COMMISSIONERS' PROGRAM TO EMPLOY NEARLY 2,000 YOUNG PEOPLE

The Franklin County Commissioners yesterday approved funding for their annual Summer YouthWorks initiative, which will employ 1,950 youth aged 14-24 over the summer after providing them with work-readiness training and ongoing mentorship. The funding totals just over \$6.5 million, and this is the program's 6th year of operation. Participants will work for a total of 160 hours over the summer if also in school, and 240 hours if not currently enrolled, and all will be paid \$10 hourly.

"YouthWorks is a homerun," said Board of Commissioners President, John O'Grady. "This program helps young people to make money while learning on the job in an office environment and gaining experience in the workplace that will help them succeed for the rest of their careers."

The commissioners' contract is with 6 community partners, Columbus Urban League, Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Godman Guild, St. Stephen Community House, Tech Corps Ohio, and the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio, who will manage the day-to-day operations of the program like recruitment, supervision, and payroll. Participating youth must be eligible for federal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funding.

"A young person's experience in the workplace can have a lifelong impact," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "Youthworks affords sorely needed networking, experience, and skill-building, in a student's field of interest. No matter how humble the job, the experience may lead to great new horizons and a sustainable job in the future."

Summer YouthWorks participants will receive work readiness training and a career assessment prior to placement in workplaces throughout the county. In recent years, about a dozen participants have been placed to work in Board of Commissioners' agencies.

"None of us is born ready for the workplace, and most of us don't have the connections to get this kind of experience in offices right out of school," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "YouthWorks is a way to help young people in our community to add to their education, experience, and resume so that they can take the next step into a good-paying career."

In addition to the Summer YouthWorks contracts, the commissioners also voted Tuesday to approve 15 other community partnership agreements for almost \$5 million. The partnerships include funding to the Greater Columbus Arts Council and the Franklin Park Conservatory, as well as for community safety, health, and human services, and children's programming to include support for Central Ohio Trauma System, the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, the Center for Family Safety and Healing, the Healthcare Collaborative of Greater Columbus, Cancer Support Community of Central Ohio, Central Ohio Diabetes Association, Children's Hunger Alliance, the Mid-Ohio Foodbank, Capital Area Humane Society, the Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio, and to COSI for free admission for children who can't otherwise afford to visit.

To see the complete list of community partners, or to apply for the Summer YouthWorks program, visit the commissioners' website at commissioners.franklincountyohio.gov.

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