

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 4, 2013

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COMMISSIONERS EXPAND INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Approve funding for new YouthWorks program

Today, Franklin County Commissioners approved \$2.3 million to expand the County's summer youth employment programs by approving funding for YouthWorks, a new employment program which will connect over 600 local low-income youth with summer internships and work opportunities. Outreach efforts will focus on recruiting youth living outside the city of Columbus limits, teen parents and youth leaving foster care.

"Employment programs which prepare individuals to enter the workforce, providing both on-the-job training and skill development, are critical to a thriving and vibrant economy," said John O'Grady, President, Franklin County Board of Commissioners. "I'm so pleased that Franklin County is able to expand our summer employment program for youth, underscoring our commitment to make job training and work experience a top priority this year."

The Franklin County YouthWorks program is a TANF-funded summer youth employment program designed to serve youth between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four. Franklin County will contract with the Columbus Urban League, Godman Guild Association, Henkels & McCoy Inc., J. Ashburn Youth Center and St. Stephen's Community Services to provide young people the opportunity to gain valuable work experience while earning a paycheck to help meet basic needs.

One of the employment opportunities is Youth WEB CORPS, an eight-week service learning experience for youth ages 14-18 being administered by the J. Ashburn Youth Center at various computer labs throughout Franklin County, including: The Academy of Urban Scholars, OSU Fisher College of Business, Magic Johnson Bridgescape, DeVry, West High School and the Metro High School. Youth will participate in eight hours of work readiness training in addition to receiving instruction and hands-on experience of web development aimed at strengthening youths' web development, project management and professionalism skills and applying those skills in the authentic task of building a website for a small business or organization in Franklin County.

Recently, Forbes listed information technology, engineering and technicians among the '10 Hardest Jobs to Fill in 2013'. "Employment opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) continue to outpace the number of job seekers trained in those fields," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "As board president last year, I was proud to bring forward a 2013 County Budget which was dedicated to investing in our next generation and which included STEM workforce training for our youth. We want Franklin County's youth to be prepared for high tech jobs available now in our high tech economy."

"We want residents to have the opportunity to be self-sufficient," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "Just as important as learning a skill and earning a paycheck, participating young adults are able to develop strong work ethics, time management, self-confidence and obtain references from employers, all of which can give a job candidate an advantage when competing for a permanent, sustainable job."

Earlier this year, as part of the 2013 S.O.A.R.hire! Summer Youth Employment Program, Franklin County provided nearly \$2 million to support summer youth employment. As a result, this year, Franklin County's

total investment in summertime employment programs exceeds \$4 million and will assist nearly 2,000 local youth.

Job placement for YouthWorks participants will occur in mid-June. Eligible youth must be residents of Franklin County, have a family income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, be a U.S. citizen, or a qualified alien, and be between the ages of 14 - 24 years. Youth ages 18 - 24 must have a minor child in their household.

Program information is available on-line at <http://jfs.franklincountyohio.gov>

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