

**South Coastal Massachusetts
Workforce Investment Board
Youth Council
P21 Strategic Plan
2009 – 2011**

June 2009

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Introduction

During the winter of 2008/2009 the Youth Council of the South Coastal Workforce Investment Board convened to develop a strategic plan to guide its activities under the P21 initiative – those activities that seek to reduce barriers and create avenues to opportunity for the region’s highest risk youth. With such enormous challenges in our economy, this inquiry was both timely and challenging.

Among the many results of our strategic planning at this time is a reconvening and re-energizing of a broad coalition, organized by the Youth Council, whose members are now much more aware of the many ways that all organizations serving youth throughout the region can -- and need -- to work together to leverage our respective resources, strengthen our impact and ultimately ensure that all youth in our region can build a promising future.

We began our planning effort with members of the Youth Council and broadened our coalition over time to include other school officials, youth providers and agency representatives. Our effort to bring additional stakeholders to the table was aided by a macroregional Youth Educational and Employment Summit, held in March 2009, and hosted by the Commonwealth Corporation. The South Coastal region was represented there by 23 individuals, some of whom had not yet been involved in the strategic planning process. Energized by the summit, this broader group of stakeholders is now poised to work closely with the Youth Council to develop strategies to address the high-risk populations that are the focus of P21.

Our 2009 strategic plan provides an opportunity to build a stronger and more focused collaboration among youth-serving agencies. We are building upon a good history of work together. For example, through our P21 strategic plan of 2005 we identified teen parents as a population in particular need of services, and proceeded to develop a GED program for them using our P21 grant. That project has been extremely successful, enabling 88 teen parents to work toward their GED and develop a career plan while accessing childcare, transportation and other needed services. It also served to focus our energies on designing and funding programs, rather than on the collaborative agenda of P21. In this era of diminishing resources, we understood that our 2009 plan needed to focus squarely on identifying ways that we can collaborate, learn from each other and leverage the resources of all agencies in our partnership to address the common needs of the youth we serve.

As we talked to stakeholders during our 2005 process and again this past winter, we examined another reality of our region that shapes how we approach our work: the diversity of our cities and towns. The 22 cities and towns within the South Coastal region are highly diverse, some with high rates of poverty, others quite affluent, some highly urban, others very rural. Stakeholders involved in both strategic plans wondered at first where common ground might be found, and what the truly regional needs might be. Our new plan focuses on how we can draw on the strengths of each other, and also recognizes the differences between communities in our region. We have decided that as need dictates, we will convene sub-regional committees to address issues locally. But working as part of the larger coalition, those sub-regional committees will be able to share information and practices with each other, and to plan together to create pathways for youth to our shared assets, including employers and post-secondary institutions.

We know as we begin to implement our plan that we are working in an era of economic uncertainty. Despite that, and because of it, we are deeply committed to helping our youth develop the skills needed for their future success, and we understand that we must continue to reach out to employers so they can work with us to prepare *tomorrow’s* workforce.

Methodology

The South Coastal WIB’s strategic planning process for P21 included data collection to provide a picture of the needs, challenges and opportunities facing youth within the South Coastal region. We also reflected on the P21 work of other WIBs, to identify specific promising strategies that we might adapt to our region and to design a structure that will help us make the most of our Youth Council and WIB resources.

This process, conducted between November of 2008 and March of 2009, began with an environmental assessment involving interviews with key stakeholders and analysis of the regional labor market, demographics, educational and employment resources. Specific sources during the environmental phase included the following (see detailed references in the appendix):

- **Local Research:** The SCWIB engaged Freeman Consulting to conduct the environmental assessment. In the course of this, the consultant team conducted interviews with Youth Council members, youth providers, employers, educators and staff of other WIBs.
- **Regional Analysis:** The SCWIB contracted Mt. Auburn Associates to conduct a tailored analysis of trends and forces affecting youth employment pathway development and functionality, which helped shape our analysis of youth challenges and opportunities.
- **Labor Market Analysis:** Labor market reports from Northeastern University’s Center for Labor Market Studies provided important information on current industry, occupational, educational and demographic trends and conditions.

Throughout the process the Youth Council and other partners met to review the research findings, identify priority areas for action, and craft specific strategies to strengthen the effectiveness of our work. In addition, prior to finalizing our plan, members of the Youth Council and other stakeholders in our region attended the Youth Education and Employment Summit, which included presentations on trends in youth education and employment and on youth development principles by Andy Sum at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University and Mo Barbosa of The Medical Foundation, respectively. The summit provided an opportunity for us to introduce a broader group of stakeholders to the challenges facing youth in our region, and to engage them in our effort to address those challenges in a strategic and collaborative manner.

The chart below illustrates our strategic planning process:

	November 2008	December 2008 – January 2009	February 2009	March – April 2009
Project Phase	Identifying our Goals	Assessing the Environment and Opportunities	Setting Priorities	Developing Strategies
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of strategic planning goals • Review and analysis of previous P21 work in the region and the current work of the Youth Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews of Youth Council and other key stakeholders • Review of demographic and industry data • Review of P21 initiatives and structure in other regions • December meeting to develop initial priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February meeting to develop goals and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Education and Employment Summit to refine strategies with a broader group of stakeholders • April board meeting to finalize the goals, objectives and action steps
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of strategic planning process and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified goals and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final strategic plan

Research Findings

A. The Labor Market and P21: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities

These are difficult times for youth, and for workforce development efforts aimed at linking youth to the labor market. Through our P21 project, the South Coastal Youth Council is working hard to both understand and respond to the changing and challenging conditions which shape the employment prospects for youth in the region, and to prepare South Coastal youth to participate in the future economy in this region. Key findings of the regional and labor market analyses we have undertaken include the following:

Teen employment is on the decline

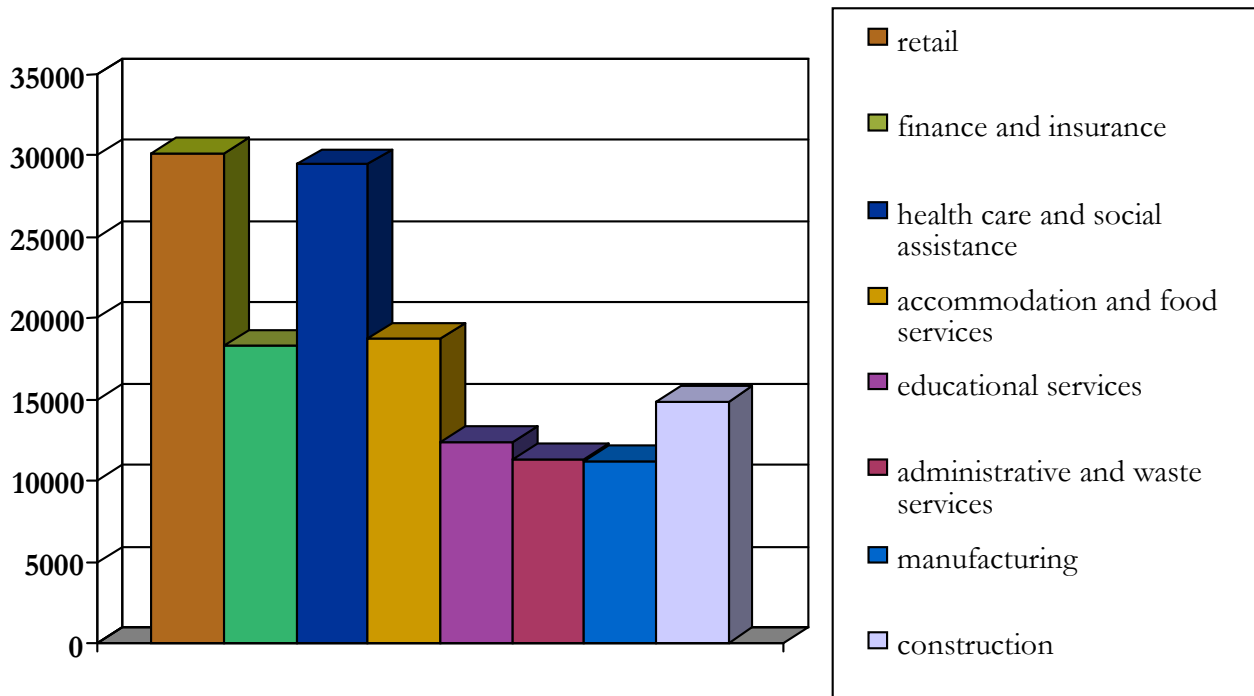
Nationally, teens are increasingly disconnected from the labor market. According to a recent national analysis by Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, teen employment has fallen to 30% in 2008 as compared to 45% in 2009, and for low-income and minority teens, the employment rate is only 10%.

Within the South Coastal region, there are a growing number of teens, with a 23% increase in 16-24 year olds since 2000. The teens in the South Coastal region seem to be bucking the national trends in that 67% are in the labor force, but the rate declines to 50% for high school drop outs. (Center for Labor Market Studies.)

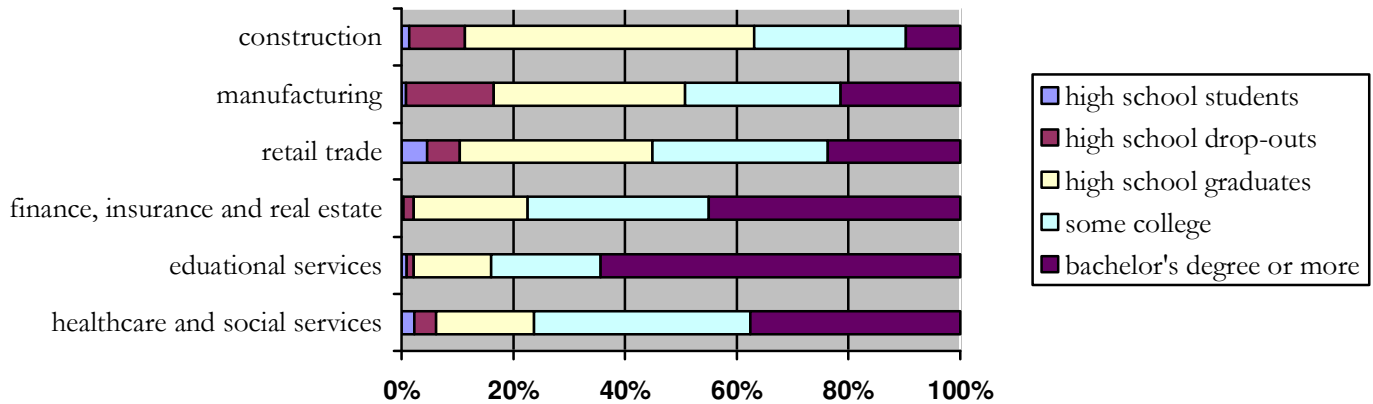
The region's economy demands post-secondary education for workers

47% of all jobs in today's South Coastal economy are concentrated in five industries, and within each of these industries, there is a growing need for post secondary education for workers, as shown by the graphs below and on the following page (Center for Labor Market Studies):

Top Industries in South Coastal Labor Market



Educational Level of Workers by Industry



The economy – and the prospects for youth – require that we invest in pathways to Post-secondary education

The trends we noted in our labor market analysis make clear that post-secondary education is critical for labor market success. While it should be noted that the data used in our labor market analysis predates the dramatic changes in our economy of the last six months, labor market analysts agree that post-secondary education will continue to be vital. Specific trends identified through the Mt. Auburn Associates Labor Market Blueprint include:

- Among the 30 fastest growing occupations in our region, 19 are in either health care or information technology.
- 22 of these fast growing occupations require at least an Associate’s Degree.
- The top five fastest growing occupations include Network Systems Analysts (43%), Computer Software Systems Engineers (39%), Computer Applications Engineers (39%), Home Health Aides (38%) and Biomedical Engineers (34%).
- The five occupations generating the greatest number of new jobs are expected to include Registered Nurses, Retail Salespersons, Computer Software Applications Engineers, Postsecondary Teachers and Janitors and Cleaners.

B. South Coastal Resources to Support Success for Youth

While South Coastal’s 22 cities and towns represent a diversity of needs and characteristics, by many measures, they are doing very well. The region brings great strengths to meeting the needs of tomorrow’s economy and today’s youth. Youth Council members, supported by the consultant team, have identified some major regional assets which can be leveraged to meet the challenges outlined above (Data from Mt. Auburn Associates). Specifically:

- A relatively high graduation rate, region-wide, of 86%.
- There are some (though not nearly enough) GED and diploma programs available to drop-outs, including four WIA funded GED programs which served nearly 300 youth in 2007.

- Regional education partners offer postsecondary occupational training programs in industries that include: allied health, automotive/marine technology, business/accounting, construction trades, early childhood education, information technology, massage therapy, office technology.
- There are many local colleges offering Associates Degree programs: Quincy College (Quincy and Plymouth), Eastern Nazarene College (Quincy), Bay State College (satellite in Middleborough), and Massasoit Community College (Brockton and Canton) which serve students who live in the South Coastal region but it is in fact in a different region.

C. Major Challenges to South Coastal's P21 Efforts

While Youth Council members are encouraged by the energy and dedication of partners to work toward youth employment and connections, there are great challenges facing the region, particularly in some of the region's larger and/or struggling communities (all data below taken from Mt. Auburn Associates, except where noted):

- Low MCAS passing rates: The region's highest 10th grade warning and failure rates were in Randolph, Hull, Quincy, Holbrook, Weymouth, Plymouth and Middleborough (2006, latest available at time of research). These were all above SCWIB average of 25% and 28% warning/failure rates in English and Math (State average: 31%/33%).
- High drop-out rates in some communities: Seven districts have drop-out rates exceeding state average of 11.7%. Randolph and Silver Lake have dropout rates exceeding 15%.
- Limited English proficiency: The highest concentrations of students with limited English proficiency are Quincy (12%) and Randolph (7%), a total of 1300 students.
- Child poverty: Free and reduced lunch eligibility is an indicator of child poverty, and a measure that is updated annually. Towns with the highest rates of eligibility for free/reduced lunch include Quincy (38.6%), Hull (26.6%) and Rockland (25.7%) (MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education).

Through interviews, focus groups and planning meetings, the consulting team helped the SCWIB to identify the priority problems facing youth, and the providers who seek to create new pathways for them. The top system and infrastructure problems identified as priorities for new solutions include:

- Limited connections between youth providers and employers.
- Lack of transportation in southern parts of the region.
- Dearth of services targeted specifically toward the needs of young people (e.g. special career center services, treatment separate from programs serving adults).
- Limited specialized support services for youth with disabilities, including learning disabilities and mental health issues. These students currently lack the additional educational support needed to complete a GED, enter training, college or employment.

Additionally, providers and Youth Council members believe that youth themselves need significant support to overcome the following personal barriers to success:

- Poverty and financial barriers to college/training.

- Substance abuse and mental health issues.
- Lack of supportive adults (including mentors).
- Limited workplace skills.

D. Research into the Activities of other Youth Councils and P21

Finally, the Youth Council reviewed the practices and programs of other Youth Councils in Massachusetts, and identified several innovative, coordinated responses to the challenges facing youth. They offer important examples for the SCWIB's Youth Council use in forming our own strategies. These include:

- Run a Summer Jobs Campaign to raise support and create internships to complement publicly funded initiatives.
- Convene employers as consultants on voc-tech program development.
- Create teacher externships in key sectors.
- Send labor market information to high school and vocational school principals.
- Create briefings for schools on how to interpret labor market information.
- Provide pre-employment workshops in schools.
- Convene all of the interested partners (Perkins, CBOs, CCs, K-12, etc) who have an interest in youth and engage them in goal-based and community-based activities designed to meet REB goals.
- Pilot the P21 Professional Youth Worker Credential (PYWC), which aims to improve program quality through professional development for staff serving vulnerable youth.

South Coastal Workforce Investment Board P21 Strategic Priorities

Goal 1: Develop the capacity of the P21 Partnership to address the needs of high-risk in- and out-of-school youth in the region.

Objective 1: Establish mechanisms to share timely, relevant information and data with youth-serving agencies about youth employment opportunities, labor market trends affecting youth, effective program models.

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE	BENCHMARKS	STATUS
1.1 Convene Youth Council and other youth-serving agencies/schools to hear presentations, discuss common challenges and potential solutions.	Ongoing, beginning April 2009	1.1.1 Minimum of 4 Youth Council meetings per year, minimum of 2 to include outside speaker.	First meeting of Youth Council and all P21 partners, April 2009
1.1a Sponsor Youth Summit on March 23, where info. from Andy Sum is shared	April 2009	1.1.2 Participation from all parts of the region will be expanded to minimum of 4 organizations from each sub-region – northern, central and southern.	Youth Summit held, involving 25 representatives from agencies and schools throughout the region.
1.1b Identify other topics/speakers and develop plans for meeting			
1.2 Strengthen and build upon communication mechanisms, delivered in print and/or electronically, that provide bi-monthly information on resources, best practices, policy issues affecting youth employment	Sept 2009	1.2.1 Six newsletters or other communications disseminated annually	New website is in design phase
1.3 Build an electronic database for easily accessible information on regional youth programs	October 2009	1.3.1 Complete database with entries from first phase of data gathering	Information collected and assembly begun
	ongoing	1.3.2 Solicit feedback for additional entries	
1.4 Co-sponsor an event for youth to provide youth and youth providers with information about drop-out prevention methods, connecting with employers and youth resources.	Spring 2009	1.4.1 Convene youth event in late spring 09.	Event scheduled for June 25, 2009 at Plymouth Career Center
1.4a Convene planning sub-committee.			

Objective 2: Increase communication and collaboration between youth employment, schools and other agencies serving youth in the region.

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE	BENCHMARKS	STATUS
<p>2.1 Enhance existing web-based resources to assist communication, information sharing and collaboration <i>among</i> all youth-serving agencies</p> <p>2.2 Minimum of 4 meetings annually of the Youth Council and partnering youth-serving agencies and schools throughout the region, as described in activity 1.1.</p> <p>2.3 Establish working group to develop an outreach plan to engage secondary schools in Youth Council activities.</p> <p>2.3a Identify target school districts and key personnel within them for outreach efforts.</p>	<p>June-August 2009</p> <p>Ongoing, beginning April 2009</p> <p>Beginning September 2009</p>	<p>2.1.1 On-line resources are identified, advertised by email.</p> <p>2.1.2 Agencies report increased knowledge of resources, communication between agencies.</p> <p>See benchmark 1.1.1 and 2</p>	

Objective 3: Incorporate professional development and continuous quality improvement for agencies serving youth, focused on integration of best practices in youth development and workforce development.

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE	BENCHMARKS	STATUS
<p>3.1 Develop training series for program staff focused on building skills and knowledge of best practices in youth employment programming among staff of schools and agencies serving in- and out-of-school youth.</p> <p>3.1a Determine specific training needs of schools and agencies.</p> <p>3.1b Develop plan for trainings, with specific target audiences identified for each topic to be addressed.</p> <p>3.1c Explore potential resources for this from Commonwealth Workforce Coalition and Commonwealth Corporation</p> <p>3.1d Continue to sponsor monthly WIA Youth Vendor meetings</p>	<p>Ongoing, beginning in January 2010</p> <p>Fall 2009</p>	<p>3.1.1 Training topics and trainers identified, scheduled</p> <p>3.1.2 Minimum 3 trainings held per year</p> <p>Contact in January 2010</p> <p>Participation of most WIA Youth vendors in monthly WIA youth vendor meetings</p>	<p>All WIA vendors currently participate</p>

<p>3.1e Extend opportunity for participation in Professional Youth Worker Credential training program</p> <p>3.1f Invite Youth Council member agencies to share what they learn through trainings in which they participate with the Youth Council as a whole</p>	<p>December 2009 and ongoing</p>	<p>Have at least three organizations participate</p> <p>At least two presentations per year</p>	<p>Three organizations have indicated interest in participating</p>
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Goal 2: Improve educational attainments, including dropout prevention, as well as student retention and recovery via key P21 stakeholders.

Objective 1: Increase involvement of schools and post-secondary education and training organizations in P21 activities to improve educational outcomes for high-risk youth.

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE	BENCHMARKS	STATUS
1.1 Explore potential interventions for middle-school youth focused on drop-out prevention, and identify a district for possible pilot.	September – December 2009	1.1.1 Complete research on WIB/middle school partnerships focused on drop-out prevention	
1.2 Work to establish a new or modify existing GED program focused on meeting the special academic needs of out-of-school youth in high-risk communities, which may include court-involved and those with mental health issues. Ensure program design includes post-GED transition planning and support.	September, 2010	1.1.2 Identify pilot school and specific project design.	
1.2a Identify district in which to work. 1.2b Develop program design 1.2c Identify and pursue potential funding sources		1.2.1 District is identified and plan is developed 1.2.2 Funding is identified and pursued	
1.3 Explore opportunities to work with post-secondary institutions to increase access and support successful transitions for high-risk in-school and out-of-school youth.	January 2011	1.3.1 Complete survey at Quincy and Massasoit.	
1.3a Survey Quincy College and Massasoit Community College to identify barriers for high-risk youth, existing supports, additional resources needed		1.3.2 Hold discussions with key officials to identify partnership opportunities.	
1.3b Discuss with Quincy and Massasoit opportunities to partner to address needs identified above			
1.4 Align youth council activities with the youth workforce development efforts of more local (sub-regional) organizations and coalitions, where goals are similar and synergies exist.	June 2009 and ongoing	1.4.1 Regular contact is made with local entities working to address local youth needs.	
		Opportunities to build upon local work and to have local work contribute to broader regional efforts, are identified and acted on.	

Objective 2: Increase relationships with employers.

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE	BENCHMARKS	STATUS
<p>2.1 Explore expansion of paid and unpaid work experiences for youth.</p> <p>2.1a Gather information on best practices from within our own region as well as other WIBs.</p> <p>2.1b Survey programs and their current employer partners about the successes and challenges of existing partnerships.</p> <p>2.1c Develop plan for approaching additional employers and/or current employer partners to develop paid and unpaid work experiences (beginning as a pilot, activity 1.3 above).</p> <p>2.1d Align existing WIA and other resources to support plans developed.</p>	<p>January, 2010</p> <p>Begin as pilot, as indicated in 1.2, above September, 2011</p>	<p>2.1.1 Survey of our region as well as other WIBs and current partnerships completed.</p> <p>2.1.2 Plan is developed for employers to be approached and specific project design.</p>	
<p>2.2 Gather information from existing employer partners in key regional industries regarding skill sets necessary for positions in the industry.</p> <p>2.2a Develop plan for information gathering and the use of information</p>	<p>Spring 2010</p>	<p>2.2.1a. Develop interview/survey form for WIB members from each critical industry</p> <p>2.2.1b. Complete description of skill sets and share with all P21 partners</p>	
<p>2.3 Initiate pilot project to link high-risk in-school and out-of-school youth to paid and unpaid work experiences with employers recruited by the WIB.</p> <p>1.3a Identify 1 district for pilot</p> <p>1.3b Recruit employers and students (incl. students involved in GED developed as part of 1.2)</p> <p>1.3c Develop design that includes appropriate incentives</p>	<p>January 2011</p>	<p>2.3.1 Recruit 5 employers to offer work experiences</p> <p>2.3.2 Ten youth are recruited, begin work, receive additional support for success</p>	

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Appendices

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- P21 Activities of Massachusetts' Youth Councils
- Research Summary Presentation, Freeman Consulting and Strategy Matters

References

Interviews beyond those of Youth Council members referenced above include:

Shari Cornett, Youth Services Coordinator, North Shore Workforce Investment Board
January 2009

Susan Lange, Vice President for Youth Pathways, Commonwealth Corporation
January 2009

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January 2009

Don Gillis, Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board Association
December 2009

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September 2008

**South Coastal Workforce Investment Board
P21/Youth Council Strategic Planning Process
Interview Protocol for Youth Providers**

Name of Interviewee: _____ Organizational Affiliation: _____

1) Establish their connection with the WIB (Youth Council member, vendor). Note current involvement:

- Referrals to career center
- Funding source (which one)
- Use WIB as source of data on jobs, employer needs
- Other?

If no current involvement or knowledge, explain WIB briefly.

2) Can you describe the services you offer youth at _____(name of their organization)_____?

Get these details:

- age range
- in-school or out-of-school
- service strategies

3) What are the outcome goals -- GED, entrance to college, job placement, etc.? If college, note what colleges:

4) What towns/areas do you serve?

5) What gets in the way of the youth you serve in succeeding in school or the workplace? What other services do they need that they do not have access to?

6) How do you connect youth to the “next step” after graduation/completion of your program?

7) For orgs involved in training or placement: What industries do you find the most opportunities for the youth you work with? Do you have any current partnerships with particular businesses?

8) Do you currently collaborate with other community partners for services or connections to school/jobs? If so, which ones?

9) Can you describe how you collaborate? Do you:

- make referrals Y, N
- develop programs together Y, N (what kind)
- seek funding together Y, N (what type, when)
- other ways? Y, N (describe)

10) Are there issues facing youth that you think providers can have a bigger impact on if they work together? What are they?

11) The South Coastal WIB is currently reviewing its role and activities to improve its ability to support youth and the youth providers in the region.

What do you think the WIB could be doing to help youth providers, schools, etc. improve the future educational and job prospects for youth?

We've thought of some things I'd like to get your feedback on. How do these sound to you?

a. To be a source of information to youth providers on skill gaps among youth, labor market opportunities, training models and funding opportunities. Would this be valuable to you? Why or why not?

If yes, in what form? Would you come to forums to get information? Participate in a listserv? Access data on their website? Other?

b. To bring youth providers from the region together to network, share information, improve their ability to make referrals. Would this be valuable to you? Why or why not?

c. To bring youth providers from the region together to develop collaborative projects and seek joint funding. (Give examples of collaborative projects, if needed.) Would this be valuable to you? Why or why not?

d. To facilitate connections between employers and the region's youth providers to help inform providers about employers needs. Would this be valuable to you? Why or why not?

e. Are there other ideas that come to mind for you? Other things that a regional convener or clearinghouse like the WIB could do to add value to your work and improve employment prospects for youth?

That completes the survey. I want to thank you very much for your time.

**South Coastal Workforce Investment Board
P21/Youth Council Strategic Planning Process
Interview Protocol for Employers**

1) I understand you are on the Youth Council. How long have you been a member?

2) What do you feel you get out of your participation on the Youth Council?

3) As an employer, what motivates you to be part of the Youth Council?

4) (If not already mentioned) Are there issues facing youth in the community or youth who you employ that you think the organizations on the Youth Council should be working to address?

5) Do you currently collaborate with schools or community organizations to provide youth with jobs or other job-related experiences, like internships or job shadowing?

Follow-up questions to determine what orgs, where, what youth populations (in-school, out-of-school), what specific jobs/experiences.

6) The South Coastal WIB is currently reviewing its role and activities to improve its ability to help youth in the region.

What do you think the WIB could be doing to help improve the future educational and job prospects for youth?

7) Is there anything you think the WIB can or should do to engage employers in an effort to address the training and job needs of youth?

We've thought of some specific roles for the Youth Council that I'd like to get your feedback on. How do these sound to you?

a. To build connections between employers and the region's youth providers so that providers can understand employer needs and the skills that youth need to be successful. Would this be valuable to you? Why or why not?

b. To bring employers and youth providers from the region together to design training projects together and to seek funding for that training. Would this be valuable to you? Why or why not?

c. Are there other ideas that come to mind for you?

That completes the survey. I want to thank you very much for your time.

Trends + Issues Affecting Youth Employment

☔ Continuing Decline in Overall Employment Rates: Massachusetts employers cut 16,800 positions in Dec. 2008, and the statewide unemployment rate jumped a full point from November, to 6.9 percent, with nearly **half the reductions** coming in the **professional, scientific, and business services sector**.

☔ Falling Teen Employment Rates Nationwide: 45% in 2000, 30% today – 10x the rate of decrease for adults, with **Latinos and African Americans harder hit** (2007 USA teen employment for white, non-hispanic: 40%, for African-American teens: 20% and for Latino teens: 30%)

☀ New Opportunities for Youth and Youth Serving Organizations in the Stimulus Package: \$1.2b for summer jobs, \$50m for Youthbuild, \$300m for Job Corps, raising max. for Pell grants, \$100m for basic services @ CBOs, FBOs.

☀ Employment projections point to new job growth in health care and information technology in South Coastal region. More than half of these new jobs will require an Associates Degree, or higher.

Our Youth Workforce: Regional Snapshot

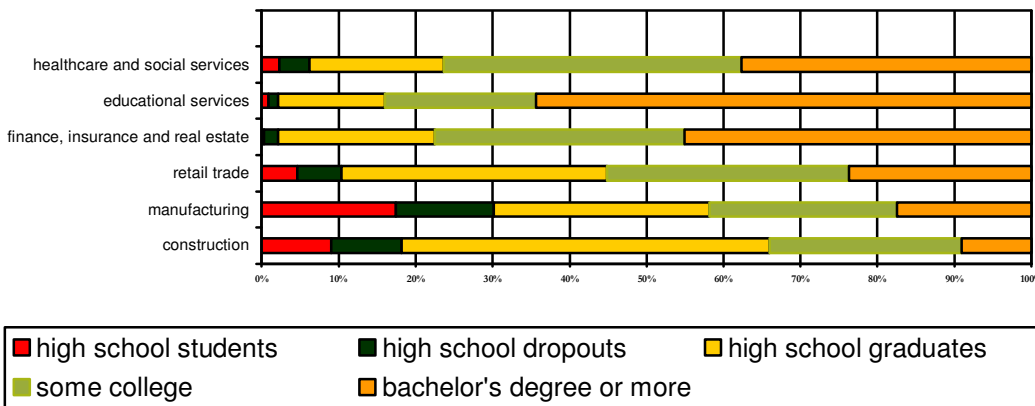
- ☐ **Growing** (23% increase 2000-06) **#s of youth in our workforce** (~ 60,000 16-24 year olds, 2006), amid an overall trend toward an aging workforce.
- ☐ **Education essential to employment for youth:** 67% regional youth employment, only 50% for high school dropouts.
- ☐ **Relatively high four-year graduation rates, region-wide:** 86% v. statewide average of 80%

Special Concerns, by City/Town

- ☐ **MCAS Rates.** Highest 10th grade warning and failure rates were in **Randolph, Hull, Quincy, Holbrook, Weymouth, Plymouth and Middleborough** (2006); these were all above SCWIB average of 25% and 28% with warning or failure scores in English and math. (State average: 31% and 33% respectively).
- ☐ **Drop-Outs:** **Randolph and Silver Lake** have dropout rates exceeding 15%, (state average: 11.7%)
- ☐ **Limited English Proficiency:** **Quincy** (12.9) and **Randolph** (5.9) have the highest rates in region (state average: 5.9%)
- ☐ **Child Poverty:** **Randolph** (45.6%), **Quincy** (38.6%), **Hull** (26.6%), and **Rockland** (25.7%) have highest eligibility rates for free/reduced lunch programs (state average: 30.7%)

South Coastal's Labor Market

- ☐ **Employment concentration:** 4 industries employ 47% of the South Coastal workforce: retail, finance and insurance, health care and accommodations/food service.
- ☐ **Most area jobs require high school diplomas and/or post secondary education:**



* Data sources are referenced on p. 17 of the South Coastal WIB Youth Council P21 Strategic Plan.

Youth Employment and the Stimulus Package

New Opportunities for Youth and Youth Serving Organizations in the Stimulus Package:

- Summer youth employment; \$1.2 billion for grants to states
- YouthBuild: \$50 million
- Job Corps: \$240 million
- Increase in PELL grant maximum to \$4,860
- Corporation for National Service and Community Service: \$160 million for
- Training in energy efficiency and renewable energy: \$500 million for DOL competitive grants program
- Training in healthcare: \$250 million for DOL competitive grants program

What can Workforce Investment Boards and other organizations focused on youth and employment do in today's economy?*

- 1) **Help youth to stay in school or reconnect with an educational program.** When the economy improves, and it will, the jobs will continue to require higher-level skills and credentials. Help youth develop those skills and credentials for the future.
- 2) **Develop relationships with employers** in industries that are expected to grow in the future. Learn what skill sets they need, what credentials they seek. Develop plans now for unpaid experiences like internships and job shadowing. Long-term relationships with employers will result in paid job experiences when the market improves.
- 3) **Identify industries that will benefit by the stimulus package** and the economic restructuring that is occurring. Construction may be a promising path for youth in the future due both to the new public investments in infrastructure and "green jobs" and the graying of the current construction workforce.
- 4) **Maintain close contact with the Department of Workforce Development and Commonwealth Corporation** to learn about how the stimulus package funds will be distributed locally.

**From interviews with Don Gillis, Executive Director of the MA Workforce Boards Association; Sheila Maguire, Vice President of Public Private Ventures; and Jason Walsh, Executive Director of Green for All.*

What is P21?

Pathways to Success by 21 (P21) is a statewide effort to improve the future prospects for vulnerable youth ages 16-21 across the Commonwealth--including those who are in school and those who are out-of-school and out-of-work.

To achieve this, P21 seeks to foster greater collaboration between state-level youth-serving agencies, while simultaneously helping youth-serving systems to better coordinate the delivery of services to vulnerable youth.

How do Youth Councils help P21 succeed?

This varies region to region, but there are common themes. All Youth Councils have goals which overlap with the broad goals of P21 as stated above. Some Youth Councils have established P21 subcommittees to focus specifically on the work of making collaboration more effective between and among agencies, and other Youth Councils have aimed to direct their program work at P21 priorities. Here are some snapshots of how Youth Councils support P21 goals in four regions of the state:

The Berkshires

The BCREB formed a Youth Council¹ which is co-chaired by a private sector and an education representative. The Youth Council oversees all work-based-learning youth programming in the region. The Youth Director notes that, "We have such a great collaboration out here through the Youth Council and our P-21 Team, that if an organization wants to start a youth program, many times they will ask the Youth Council to serve as the advisory committee/oversight body for the program they are looking to implement. This happens frequently because most likely the particular organization is part of our P-21 Team and/or our Youth Council."

Springfield Region

The Youth Council task is not to develop or operate programs but to provide leadership, strategic planning guidance and oversight for the various youth initiatives within our region (WIA programs, STC, MCAS, P21, etc.). We engage employers to provide work experience and internships, and to provide funds. We engage the non-profit, public and community-based agencies as the direct service delivery agents working with the youth since the REB and Youth Council do not. What makes the Youth Council successful is strong leadership and champions for effective alignment of youth services.

Boston Region

The Boston PIC, including the Youth Council and P21 membership, has been doing outreach to dropouts since June of 2006, in the context of its role as convener of the Youth Transitions Task Force. The Task Force (broader than the WIB) has conducted research, developed policy recommendations, and piloted new practices aimed at addressing the high school dropout crisis. The PIC's dropout outreach pilot is an action research project that has a direct impact on youth while collecting new data on why students drop out of school, why they return, what barriers they face. At the same time, this effort provides important information about system strengths and gaps. The PIC has hired two "dropout recovery specialists." During the summers of 2006 and 2007, the specialists, both of whom are former dropouts, worked with the Schools (BPS) Project Reconnect outreach team -- including BPS departments, Boston Youth Service Network, and the Work Place career center -- to identify young people who had dropped out of school, help them return to school, and frame policy and program recommendations.

¹ The BCREB YC is typical in that it is comprised of a school superintendent, secondary principal, post secondary educator, representatives from the Department of Transitional Assistance, local law enforcement officials, adult basic education and literacy providers, BCREB members, the Service Delivery Area (Berkshire Training and Employment Program), youth service providers, local public housing authority directors, parents and participants.

North Shore

North Shore WIB has identified school dropouts as a target population. Youth Council Partners agreed to work together using a strength-based model and to use the same model to work with their young people at the individual program level. Partners identified 3 strategies to guide their work ...1) Recruit school personnel from districts to be active members within the P21, 2) Implement a uniform questionnaire to assess youths' assets, 3) Analyze youth survey to direct work together and learn how to use these methods at the youth worker, agency and community levels.