

YouthWorks Campaign Needs Support for Summer Jobs

Nonprofit Kaiser Permanente Foundation Mid-Atlantic donates \$10,000, but gap remains between number of youth registered for summer jobs and number of jobs identified.

SOURCE: Baltimore City Foundation/YouthWorks

On Wed., May 7 at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, more than 500 Baltimore City youth interviewed for summer job positions with more than 70 employers at the YouthWorks Career Fair. These youth are part of the more than 6,500 teens that are expected to begin their job experiences on June 23.

Because federal funding that used to provide summer jobs no longer exists, Mayor Sheila Dixon launched the YouthWorks "Summer Jobs are Everyone's Business" campaign.

While the YouthWorks campaign is making progress soliciting financial contributions and commitments to hire teens directly, officials report that more teens have registered than the number of summer jobs currently identified. They point out that there is "still time for all interested groups and individuals to show support for the summer jobs program."

They point to "steady support" from the business community, as evidenced during a brief ceremony at the fair when the nonprofit Kaiser Permanente Foundation Mid-Atlantic presented a \$10,000 check to support YouthWorks.

On hand to accept the check on behalf of YouthWorks was Deputy Mayor Salima Siler Marriott. "YouthWorks is one of Mayor's Dixon's top priorities," she said. "These summer jobs will teach our young people the value of work and the skills that employers require."

The summer jobs program provides six-week employment opportunities for Baltimore City youth, ages 14 to 21. Mayor Sheila Dixon has identified YouthWorks as one of her administration's top initiatives; this year's goal is to provide work for 6,500 youth.

It costs \$1250 to support a youth in a six-week summer work experience.

Because federal funding that used to provide summer jobs no longer exists, Dixon launched the YouthWorks "Summer Jobs are Everyone's Business" campaign to seek support from employers, community organizations, foundations, the faith-based community, educators, and state and city agencies.

The **Greater Baltimore Committee** (GBC) is encouraging city businesses to become more involved than in past years by making donations and creating summer jobs. Among the businesses at the job fair were UPS, ESPN Zone, Target, and the Renaissance Hotel. Also participating were the Baltimore City Health Department, the Maryland Department of Education, and Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake.

"I think that there are few things more positive that a business could do than to participate in this program," said **GBC President & CEO Donald C. Fry** in a prepared statement to the press. "I urge all businesses themselves to make a highly positive choice and support the YouthWorks initiative. It will benefit our city's young people and our community's future."

Employers who did not attend the Career Fair, but are interested in hiring YouthWorks participants, can still have their employment needs met in time for the summer jobs program, according to city officials. It costs \$1250 to support a youth in a six-week work experience. The employment period extends from June 23 through August 1. Contact the YouthWorks office at 410-396-6722.

Tax-deductible donations to underwrite identified job opportunities may be mailed to: Baltimore City Foundation/YouthWorks, c/o Mayor's Office of Employment Development, 101 W. 24th Street, Baltimore, MD 21218.