

Memo: Press Release

July 1, 2020

Summer Youth Funding Announcement

(Hartford, CT)— The City of Hartford and Capital Workforce Partners are pleased to announce that the City of Hartford Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP) continues to gain support from funders to support a goal of nearly 1,000 youth accessing SYELP and related activities, at a time when youth and families are being disproportionately impacted by COVID and unemployment issues. This is part of a larger Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative effort to assure that all Hartford youth will be connected to safe, quality summer activities this year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funds include a \$1-million commitment from the City of Hartford, \$150,000 from the Travelers Foundation, \$60,000 from the JP Morgan Chase Foundation, \$15,000 from the Bank of America Foundation, \$34,500 from the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) and \$300,000 from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Funds from the State of CT Youth Employment Program and the CT Department of Children and Families have also been recently committed.

SYELP supports low-income Hartford youth in summer employment and training opportunities leading to career pathways, and has been redesigned to provide a safe, quality experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's SYELP will provides local youth the opportunity to engage in both virtual training and safe work-based learning experiences that contribute to future career pathways successes. The programs are designed to develop career readiness for youth between the ages of 14 and 24 through a six-week program comprising virtual training modules and worksite placements in high-demand sectors at several hundred worksites.

“With the early closure of school and a nationwide recession, providing work opportunities for you people is more important than ever, and we’re proud to partner with Capital Workforce Partners to make sure summer youth employment continues in these challenging times,” said Mayor Luke Bronin. “Nearly 1,000 young people will benefit from the career

readiness training and on the job experience that the summer youth employment program provides, and getting this year's program up and running posed unprecedented challenges. I want to thank all the partners who came together alongside the city and the state to make summer youth employment possible this year, including the Travelers Foundation, the JP Morgan Chase Foundation, the Bank of America Foundation, and more."

The Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program and Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative summer engagement strategies are made possible through partnerships with a significant number of community-based organizations and employers in Hartford, and is part of a larger regional Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program in the Capitol Region, serving up to 1500 youth.

"CHEFA is proud to support Capital Workforce Partners and the statewide Workforce Boards with grant funding through CHEFA's FY 2020 Targeted Grant Program. This funding will have a meaningful impact on Hartford youth during this challenging time. We are pleased to be able to participate in this important initiative as we seek to facilitate efforts addressing workforce needs" stated Jeanette W. Weldon, CHEFA's Executive Director.

"While the pandemic has changed the way we are living our lives, it is imperative that our commitment to our most vulnerable young people remain steadfast. JPMorgan Chase is proud to support the efforts to create meaningful career readiness experiences for Hartford's youth this summer through SYELP. We applaud the City of Hartford for helping to keep our young people on a path to success even during the most challenging times," Mark Telesmanick, Chase Market Director, Hartford

SYELP is particularly important given the impact of COVID-19, which has led to high urban youth unemployment and disconnected youth issues. Heightened concerns include high school seniors leaving with a significantly reduced capacity to enter a successful post-secondary college/career pathway. Furthermore, COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting communities of color where economic disparity already exists in low-income families, youth, and less-educated workers. This year's SYELP program has been redesigned to provide a comprehensive virtual venue of summer youth employment options, given the "Social Distancing" requirements by the State of CT, which reduces the availability of in-person work experience for youth. Other

resources offered this summer are limited community service projects and mental health services.

“As we collectively navigate the challenges brought on by the coronavirus and the need to advance racial equality and economic opportunity, we remain committed to supporting youth in our local community by connecting them to jobs, skills-building, and leadership development,” said Joe Gianni, Hartford Market President of Bank of America. “Investing in our youth through the City of Hartford’s Summer Youth and Learning Program will provide guidance to students seeking a pathway to success.”

This summer programming would not be possible without the aid of local businesses and regional employers who help youth develop and expand their career-readiness skills in various high demand industries and occupations. SYE programs have been shown to increase participant school attendance, build soft skills (including emotional/conflict management), reduce incidences of youth violence, and bolster participant job readiness and post-secondary aspirations. The 2020 SYELP and HOYC activities will be critical in supporting Hartford youth.

Alex Johnson, President and CEO of Capital Workforce Partners, emphasizes that “SYELP addresses the needs to address the city and region’s skills gaps. We must cultivate our future talent pipeline – the supply of young people with the soft skills and technical skills needed to respond to the COVID RECOVERY, in industries including healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and information technology, among others. SYELP supports the state’s future talent pipeline by providing low-income, disengaged, and disconnected youth who might otherwise lack the skills and credentials to fill these job openings with work experiences that will increase their educational attainment and work readiness.”

Overall, these funding awards will provide essential education, career, and mental health services to youth. The Summer Youth Employment Program will begin July 6, 2020 and run until August 28, 2020.

For more information on summer youth programs and opportunities please visit: <https://capitalworkforce.org/syelp/>.

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July 8, 2020