

REB Connections

NEWS FROM THE METRO NORTH REGIONAL
EMPLOYMENT BOARD, CAMBRIDGE, MA

SUMMER 2010

REB Receives Award to Help Bridge Healthcare Skills Gap

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that in the decade between 2008-2018, job growth for clinical laboratory workers will exceed 14%, a rate that is "faster than average for all occupations." The BLS also predicts that the number of job openings in the field will continue to exceed the number of those entering the field. To address the critical need for clinical laboratory workers in the Metro North region, the REB has joined forces with Lahey Clinic, Hallmark Health, and Middlesex Community College (MCC) to establish the Metro North Healthcare Partnership. With a \$200K grant that was recently awarded to the REB by Commonwealth Corporation, the Partnership will implement a long-term, multi-pronged strategy for identifying and developing solutions to meet the growing need for additional training and education in clinical laboratory science. To ensure a positive impact over the long-term, the Partnership will also expand membership to include all of the major healthcare institutions within the Metro North region.

Youth Employment Programs in 2009: A Great Success!



Left: Dominque Williams, SYEP participant, with Governor Patrick at a community meeting to discuss ARRA-funded initiatives.

provide meaningful employment to over 700 low-income youth.

Through the SYEP Program, the REB employed over 520 youth over the course of the summer (2009), in jobs throughout the 20 cities and towns in the Metro North region. An additional 200 youth, from the six cities of Everett, Malden, Medford, Revere, Somerville and Woburn, were employed in the fall through the EOPS program. With training and support provided by employment supervisors as well as staff at the Metro North Career Centers, both programs provided eligible youth with the opportunity to gain valuable work experience, learn transferable skills, and be paid \$8.00 an hour. Overall, the programs helped to ensure that local teens not only enjoyed positive work experiences, but in the process also developed skills and experience that will pay dividends long into the future.

Right: Kendall Green, SYEP and EOPS youth employee. Kendall worked for the Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences.



In 2009, a year of record-breaking unemployment for area youth, the Metro North Regional Employment Board (REB) enjoyed success in putting youth to work. Between two separately funded programs – The Metro North Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and the Metro North EOPS Program, funded by the Executive Office of Public Safety -- the REB was able to

Welcome New REB Members!

The REB is pleased to announce the appointment of the following four individuals to the Board:

- Kitty Bowman, Director, MGH/ Revere CARES
- Joanna Dowling, Director of Operations, The Custom Group, and President, The Center for Manufacturing Technology
- Camille Ferrullo, Director, Department of Transitional Assistance (Malden)
- Paul Richard, Director of Sustainability, Warner Babcock Institute for Green Chemistry

REB Receives \$300K for Green Jobs

The Metro North REB will soon receive \$300K as part of the Massachusetts State Energy Sector Partnership (MB-SESP) Award. Supported by funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through the U.S. Department of Labor, the award is one component of a major federal initiative established to help promote economic growth by training workers in skills required for emerging industries. The Metro North Regional Employment Board has partnered with the Metro South/West Regional Employment Board, the Boston Private Industry Council, and the Office of Jobs and Community Services of the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation on this initiative. Working with the Metro North Career Centers, the REB will use the funds over a two-year period to identify and train eligible area residents for a wide range of "green" jobs in areas such as: HVAC, facilities maintenance, and remediation technology.

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REB to Assist Former Workers of Somerville-based Company

The Metro North REB has received a grant from the Rapid Response team of the Department of Workforce Development to provide critical education, training and job counseling services to former employees of the Ames Safety Envelope Company. The award, which is funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), will serve to help these workers to secure other means of employment by providing them with a wide array of job counseling and occupational skills training, as well as opportunities to develop English language skills. Over the course of the 14-month grant period (ending June 30, 2011), the Metro North Career Centers will also provide a wide range of direct services which include: outreach and recruitment, case management, job search workshops, computer skills development and job placement services.

REB Forum Sparks Partnerships to Address STEM Challenges



On a recent June morning in Burlington, MA, leaders in business and education from across the Metro North region gathered for a shared purpose: to learn how they can work together to address the growing crisis in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). The diverse mix of professionals included engineers, scientists, CEOs, math whizzes, technology gurus, school superintendents, career development professionals and sustainability experts. Sponsored by the Metro North Regional Employment Board (Cambridge, MA), the forum built upon a shared understanding of the challenges by exploring practical strategies to inspire students to pursue careers in the STEM fields. The overarching goal of the forum was to prepare students, and the U.S., to compete and succeed in our rapidly changing global economy.

Keynote speaker Linda Fuhrman kicked off the event by explaining why the need for a STEM-educated workforce in the U.S. has reached crisis proportions. Fuhrman, who admits she is on a mission to “make it sexy to be nerd,” is a self-described rocket scientist and Director of Education at Draper Laboratory. Fuhrman cited the unprecedented gap between the number of young people who are choosing to enter the STEM professions and the growing need for a STEM-trained workforce in the U.S. She further explained that the crisis is exacerbated by the fact that the baby boomer generation is now reaching retirement age – as well as the increasingly complex nature of STEM-related challenges. Quoting a statistic from a 2009 report from the Massachusetts Employers’ STEM Agenda, Fuhrman stated that “Eighty-four percent of students in the U.S. would rather eat their vegetables, take out the garbage, or go to the dentist than do math.” This statistic is consistent with findings from international assessments, which indicate academic performance of students in the US lags far behind many of their peers around the globe. Fuhrman also addressed the critical need for increased diversity in the workforce – particularly women and those from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Pat Abbott, REB Chair and Principal of Venture Forward Partners, welcomed the attendees and introduced Larisa Schelkin. Schelkin, who moderated the panel discussion, is CEO, President and Co-Founding Director of the Diversity and Outreach in Math and Engineering (DOME) Foundation, as well as a nationally recognized advocate for diversity and women in STEM.

The panelists highlighted a diverse array of initiatives designed to inspire youth in the STEM fields - particularly beyond middle school – when, as many studies indicate, kids tend to lose interest. The panelists included: Edwin Guarin, Microsoft; Lance Hartford, MassBioEd; Angelique Torres, CDM; Paul Richard, Warner Babcock Institute for Green Chemistry, and Antonio de la Serna, Draper Laboratory. Each panelist outlined the initiatives their organizations have established. Examples of these innovative programs include: sponsoring national robotics competitions; training teachers to bring green chemistry into the classroom; providing educators with gaming software that builds skills and interest in STEM; hosting job shadow days; working with schools to develop teams of professionals to support student interest in STEM; giving on-site tours of innovative STEM-related projects; and establishing STEM education grants.

With an eye towards the future, REB Executive Director Nancy Brown concluded the forum by announcing that the REB is in the process of establishing a regional STEM planning team, as well as a clearinghouse for STEM resources. Additionally, Brown said that the REB will continue to serve as a catalyst to help foster new partnerships and initiatives to revitalize interest and leadership in STEM within the Metro North region and beyond.