

YouthWorks Summer Jobs Program Evaluation

Central MA 2013

CENTRAL MA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

Introduction: This report presents the results of the summer 2013 YouthWorks (YW) participant and employer host evaluations. For this report, we used the same evaluation tools as previous years (excluding last year's participant evaluation designed by state officials).

This past summer, 371 youth participated in the YW program that included 10 hours of work readiness training followed by up to six weeks of paid employment for 20 to 25 hours a week. The main objectives of the program were to build participant employability by providing them with training, supervision, and work experiences.

The state uses a formula to set the target cities to be funded under the YW program. In the Central MA region, Worcester was the targeted city. In addition, the YW program allows for up to 10% of funding to be used outside of the formula cities. In Central MA, these outside communities are determined by the Central MA Workforce Investment Board upon a recommendation from its Youth Workforce Investment Council. This summer, Southbridge and Webster were included as outside communities.

An employer and youth exit survey was administered at the completion of the summer work experience. In addition, this evaluation includes a review of program documents that captured funding levels, number of youth served, and demographic characteristics.

Questions that guide this evaluation include:

- ★ **Who was served?**
- ★ **How well were they served?**
- ★ **How effective was the training?**

In 2013, 41 of 63 employers and 146 of 371 youth responded to the exit survey.

Profile of Costs and Participants

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total funds from Commonwealth Corp to WCAC	\$367,000	\$519,225	\$603,495	\$684,206	\$791,969	\$502,322	\$463,680
# of YouthWorks jobs/# of job sites	284/44	306/64	315/38	489/49	520/73	370/56	371/63
# WPS/MCAS internships	126	97	99	81	98	91	71
Age	14-15: 6% 16-18: 75%	14-15: 10% 16-18: 76%	14-15: 24% 16-18: 60%	14-15: 11% 16-18: 71%	14-15: 11% 16-18: 71%	14-15: 12% 16-18: 66%	14-15: 11% 16-18: 62%
% Non-white	84%	87%	88%	87%	87%	89%	91%
% Poor academics	42%	25%	25%	20%	12%	20%	26%
% Single parent household	26%	46%	44%	46%	46%	38%	57%
% Teen parents	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	3%	4%
% Foster care	2.5%	2.5%	4%	5%	5%	1%	5%
% Homeless	2%	3%	2.4%	4%	4%	2%	6%
% Court involved	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	5%	9%
% Limited English	16%	10%	14%	12%	11%	8%	7%

As the chart indicates, program funding has increased until 2011 (which included state funding as well as federal stimulus funds) and has declined over the following two years.

Funds are allocated to low-income communities in the Central MA region to the Central MA Workforce Investment Board. Communities are identified as eligible to receive YW funding

based on the state’s allocation method using current American Community Survey (ACS) data on youth in poverty.

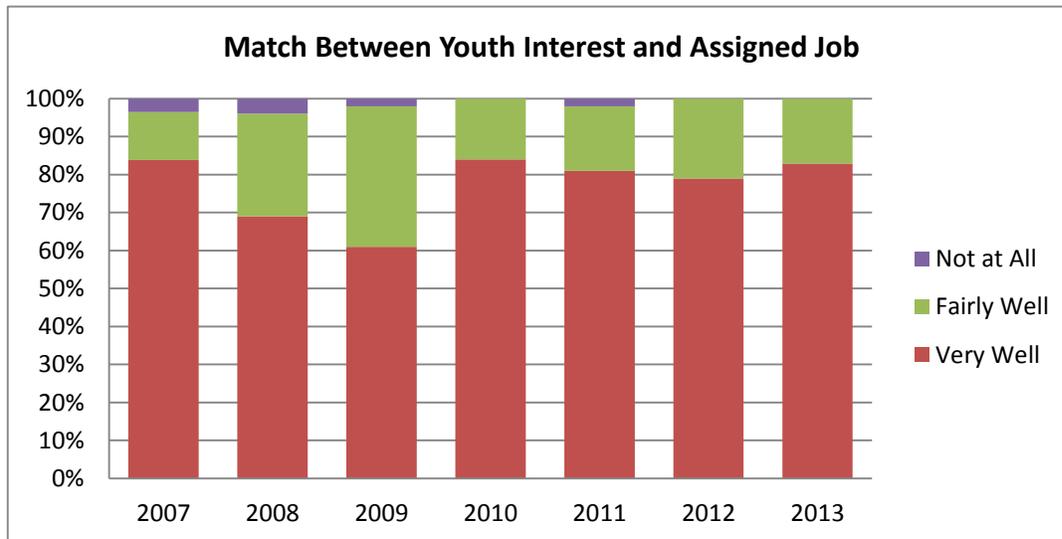
In an effort to strategically target high-needs youth, programs were required to direct 15% of their allocated funding to young people with high risk factors such as homelessness, foster care, and court involved. The profile of eligible youth, based on mandated risk factors and barriers to employment, is similar each year with the greatest percentage of youth served being non-white and from single parent households.

Funds are received and managed by the Central MA Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB) and the program is managed by Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC) in Worcester and Webster, and the Center of Hope (COH) in Southbridge. WCAC and COH serve as the employer of record for youth participants.

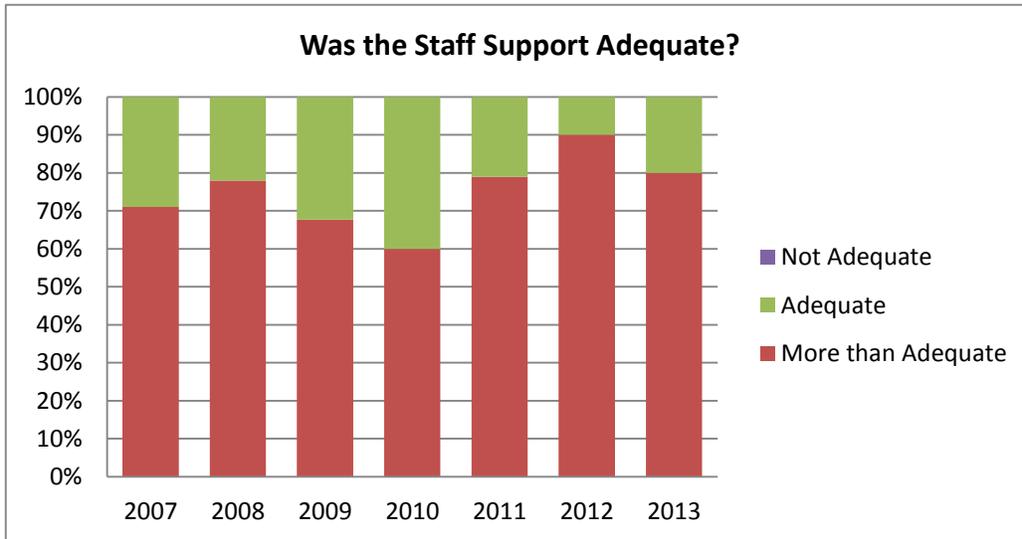
It should be noted that this summer, like the previous two, saw a majority of the funding come through state supplemental and current year funding (funding available at the start of the state fiscal year, July 1st of the current summer), this late notice of funding availability and start date poses significant planning and operational challenges. The state legislature has “forward funded” the program for next summer, allowing communities a greater ability to plan ahead based on using funding from Fiscal Year 2014, ending next June.

Below are presented trends over the past seven years from the Employer and Youth Evaluation Surveys (*six years where 2012 data from youth surveys is not available) which highlight areas where we can improve this already very successful program.

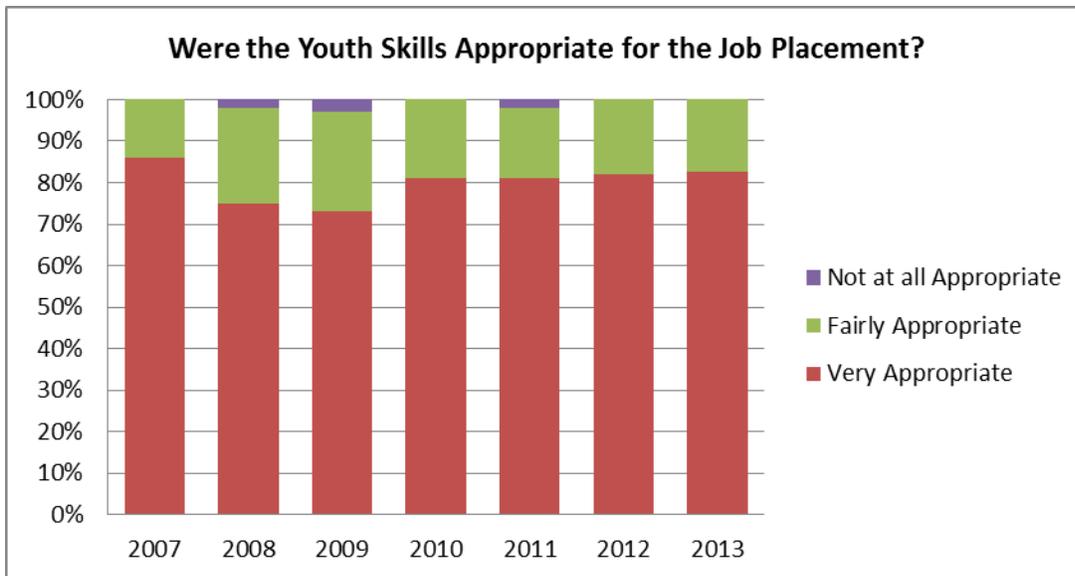
EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS



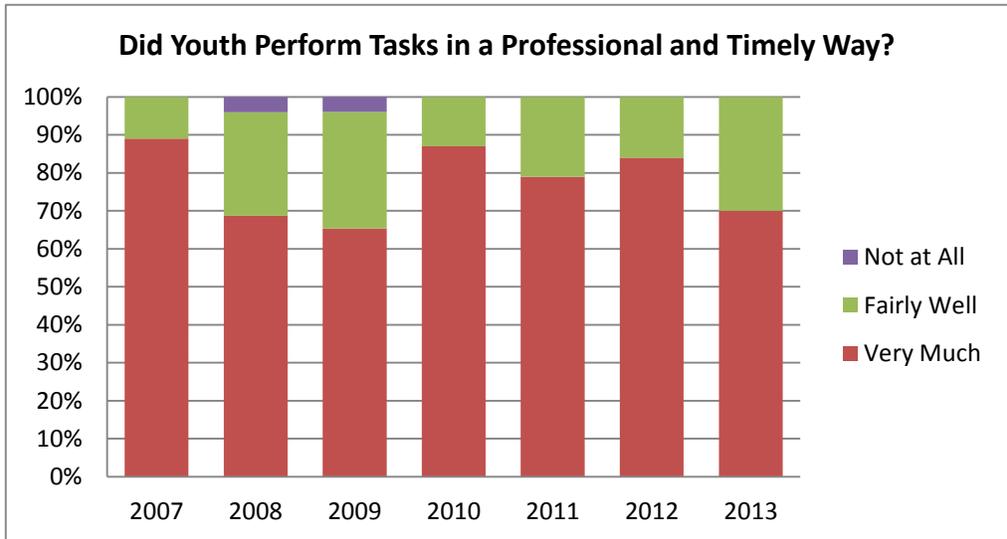
Employers have consistently felt that the match between the youth participant’s interest and the job they were assigned to has been done “Very Well.” We have also seen a slight increase in “Very Well” from 79% in 2012 to 83% in 2013.



In the years 2010 through 2012 a growing percentage of employers reported that the staff support was “More than Adequate.” Although down slightly from 2012, 80% of employers in 2013 felt that staff support was “More than Adequate” and the other 20% reported the support to be “Adequate.”



Since 2010, we have seen a slight increase in employers reporting youth skills to be “Very Appropriate” for the job placement. In 2013, 83% of employers found the youth skills “Very Appropriate.”



Down from 2012, 70% of employers reported that they agreed that youth “Very Much” completed assigned tasks in a professional and timely manner. The other 30% reported “Fairly Well.” This may be an area in which YW may seek improvement through a refinement of the pre-employment readiness training.

A sample of employer feedback from the survey:

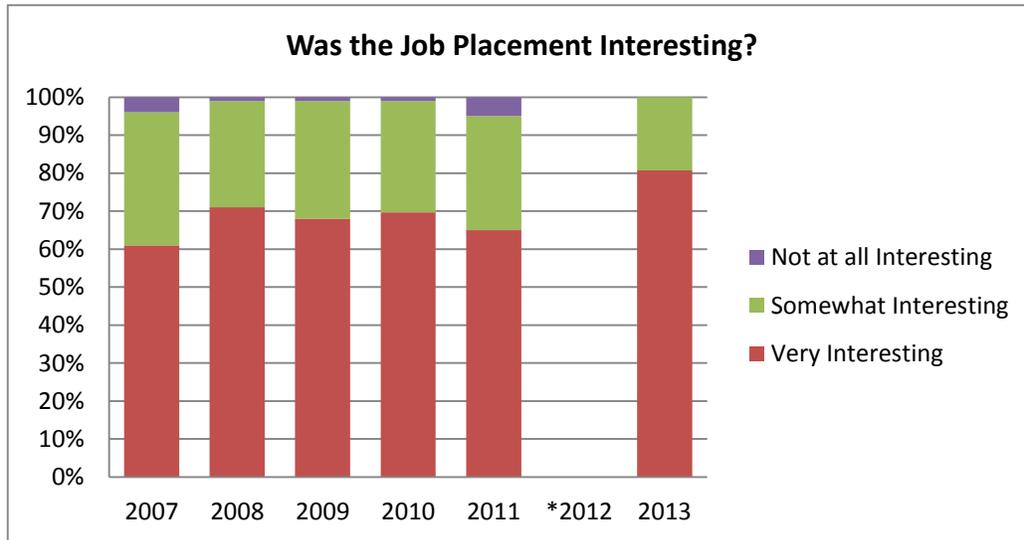
- ★ I feel that the program gets better every year and must credit Bob Morrison and all the WCAC staff for their commitment to our youth.
- ★ Great program overall.
- ★ Definitely good to keep youth busy.
- ★ All workers were prepared.
- ★ A wonderful program that benefits youth and the agency.
- ★ The process went smoothly.
- ★ Always a good experience to work with WCAC.

A sample of suggested enhancements or improvement to the experience from the survey:

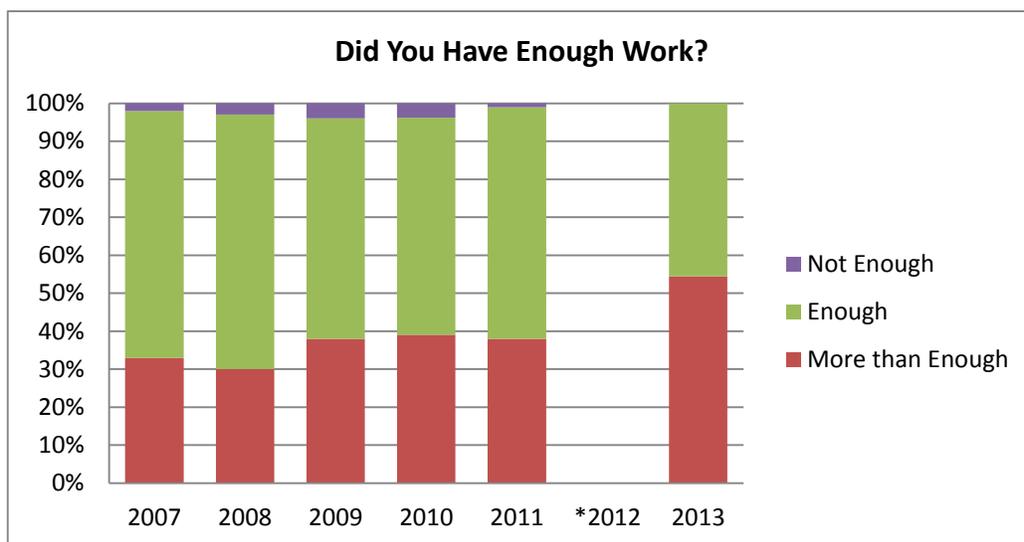
- ★ I would appreciate receiving the evaluation after a few weeks of work are performed in order to answer the situation better.
- ★ Having money allocated for case-management for youth.
- ★ More clarity in funding distribution as early as possible.

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS

**Please note that youth data from 2012 was not collected locally as this was completed through a statewide evaluation process.*



80% of youth participants found their job placement to be “Very Interesting.” This is the highest percentage yet.



2013 youth participants reported a near 50/50 split that they were assigned “Enough” or “More than Enough” work. No youth reported “Not enough” work.



99% of youth participants reported that they were given “Enough” training through the 2013 YW program.

A sample of youth feedback from the survey:

- ★ I thought the program was great and fun for the kids. I was always busy and never bored. Overall I had a blast.
- ★ This was definitely a good program for the community and helps in many ways.
- ★ The summer job was great. I enjoyed working where I did.
- ★ I thoroughly enjoyed this experience I believe that it should be open to all.
- ★ Overall the program is good and it helps us all. It helps youth get the jobs and experience they need.