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GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES NEW FUNDING FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN SPRINGFIELD**Part of Comprehensive Approach to Combating Youth Violence**

SPRINGFIELD-Thursday, May 15, 2008- Fulfilling his commitment to investing in youth development in Massachusetts, Governor Deval Patrick today announced that the City of Springfield will receive just over \$500,000 in YouthWorks funding for summer jobs this summer, an increase of more than \$140,000.

The regional allocation for three cities in Hampden County which include Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee totals \$767,322.

Joined by Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Suzanne M. Bump, Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. JudyAnn Bigby and Secretary of Public Safety and Security Kevin M. Burke at the Dunbar Community Center in Springfield, Governor Patrick expressed his commitment to taking a comprehensive approach to combating youth violence through prevention, intervention and enforcement. Funding for summer jobs for youth is an important part of the administration's prevention and intervention strategies.

"Summer jobs raise the hopes and skills of young people in the Commonwealth and give them the opportunity to work and to earn," said Governor Patrick. "This important investment in the YouthWorks summer jobs program will enable hundreds of youth to find opportunity on the job this summer."

Governor Patrick has called for increasing youth jobs funding by \$2.5 million statewide in his FY09 budget, up from \$6.7 million last year in FY08.

Through this funding, administered by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Commonwealth Corporation, the Hampden County Regional Employment Board (REB), working with the Mayor of Springfield, The Mass Career Development Institute, the FutureWorks Career Center and other organizations, will leverage other resources, including jobs paid by private sector employers to supplement the public resources from the Commonwealth and expand the number of youth employment opportunities.

The REB will lead a regional and collaborative summer jobs campaign with the Cities of Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee, which will aim to secure summer jobs for as many as 1,000 low income youth in these cities. This campaign is also a direct partnership with state government including the Governor's office and the Attorney General's office which is contributing an additional \$10,000 to pay about 20 youth from low income neighborhoods to work on community betterment projects.

YouthWorks helps employers pay for the wages of the summer jobs placements, where youth are employed in a variety of areas including administrative, camp counselors, and maintenance and landscaping. More than 90 employers in the Hampden County region, such as the Big Y Supermarkets, Western Mass Electric Co., the Dunbar Community Center, UMASS, Springfield Boys and Girls Club are just some that have sponsored youth employment opportunities.

"We must take steps to connect our youth to job opportunities now as the greatest predictor of holding a job as an adult is one who holds a job as a teenager," said Secretary Bump. "Teens who work are put on a path that leads to greater academic success and lifetime earnings."

Statewide, the percentage of teens in the labor force has declined dramatically from 57 percent in 1999 to 48 percent in 2006. The employment rate of teens declined from 53 percent in 1999 to 39 percent in 2006. These changes are even larger in the Bay State's cities and among low-income families.

More than \$4.1 million in investments have been made by the Patrick-Murray Administration in the City of Springfield through various grant programs administered through the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Executive Office of

Health and Human Services and Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Grant programs are providing youth with education, skill development and employment opportunities.

The Patrick-Murray administration recently awarded a \$140,000 implementation grant to a community coalition including the New North Citizens Council and the Spanish American Union. Supported initiatives include a youth leadership component that begins with the training of peer leaders in leadership, group skills, prevention awareness and strategy implementation. Peer leaders then promote prevention among younger youth utilizing interventions that include education, additional youth development opportunities and violence prevention strategies. The Leadership Program will create a recurring pipeline for training youth to become leaders in violence prevention within their own community.

"These grants reflect our shared commitment to helping ensure that our youth have multiple opportunities to succeed in life," said Secretary Bigby. "Working together across state government and with community organizations, we can provide at-risk youth with educational and employment opportunities that will serve them for years to come."

In 2007, more than \$2 million was awarded by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to Springfield. Funding includes an \$1.4 million Shannon grant to support youth development activities in Springfield made to a network of community partners which include the Springfield Police Department, City of Springfield, Mass Career Development Institute, Boys and Girls Club, Puerto Rican Cultural Council, Dunbar Community Center, as well as the Hampden County District Attorney and Sheriff's office.

In addition, Byrne funding of nearly \$690,000 was awarded in 2007 with \$566,955 to the City of Springfield in December 2007 and \$120,175 to support summer jobs and recreation in the City.

"It is important that efforts among law enforcement and social service providers are coordinated and targeted," said Secretary Burke. "As the Governor has noted before, our mission is to create safe spaces for our youth to make good decisions and everyone must be at the table working toward that goal-police officers, prosecutors, our schools and local employers. The Governor's investment across various disciplines reflects that philosophy."

Employers looking for additional information on hiring youth can visit <http://www.commcorp.org/youthworks/employer-towns.html> or call toll-free at 866-968-8461.

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