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Workforce Alliance Connects Organizations with Emergency Funding to Hire Displaced Workers & Expand Community Services

Community Hubs Continue to Adapt and Expand to Serve New Haven Families

NEW HAVEN, CT (April 16, 2021) – Leaders from Workforce Alliance, The Boys & Girls Club of New Haven, YMCA, and Clifford Beers gathered at the Boys & Girls Club to share the success of the Learning Hubs and how grant funding through Workforce Alliance helped them and can help other regional community organizations to hire unemployed or under-employed jobseekers to fill vital, short-term humanitarian relief roles.

“Our collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club, the YMCA, Clifford Beers is a strong example of how we can help community organizations access funding to extend the reach of their vital services by hiring short-term workers they need to get the job done,” said Bill Villano, president and CEO of Workforce Alliance.

Workforce Alliance is sharing in a statewide \$434,000 National Emergency Grant to aid workers dislocated by the pandemic and help non-profits and municipalities. Organizations in greater New Haven and Middlesex County can partner with Workforce Alliance to recruit and hire pre-screened workers for humanitarian relief efforts and receive funding to cover up to 100% of wage reimbursement.

Vicki Gelpke, business services specialist for Workforce Alliance is reaching out to community organizations in greater New Haven and Middlesex County to that are rolling out humanitarian relief programs. “By using the grant funding that can cover up to 100 percent of wage reimbursement and recruiting from our pre-screened and qualified applicants, organizations can add short-term workers and extending the impact of their programs.”

The Boys & Girls Club and YMCA have hired eight short-term workers for the Learning Hubs programs, which are again offering summer programming.

The Boys & Girls Club of New Haven opened its Learning Hub in The Hill neighborhood in September 2020 and was able to offer its program in person last summer to about 55 children for six weeks.

Barbara Chesler, interim executive director of the The Boys & Girls Club of New Haven announced “this summer we’ll bring the attendance numbers up and will utilize the safety models we developed during our Learning Hub in the past year to accommodate 125 to 135 children. Keeping people employed is something that has been overlooked. We would not have been able to do this without Workforce

Alliance and the 23 members of our staff who have been here every day from 8 to 5 and are dedicated role models.”

Boys & Girls Club Director of Programs and Administration Won Jung’s position is funded by the National Emergency Grant. Jung is looking forward to offering an academic focus in the morning, and then traditional summer fun in the afternoon.

When Ebony Gibbons’ hospitality job was eliminated due to COVID-19, she completed an online application through Workforce Alliance’s American Job Center in New Haven and was very happy to have the opportunity to join the Boys & Girls Club Learning Hub. “I love coming to work every day and helping children. I am so thankful for the opportunity.”

Raymond Allen, a father of two girls who attend the Learning Hubs at the Boys & Girls Club shared what he said many parents feel about the program, “I’m not sure how we could work and have our girls in school if it wasn’t for this program. It’s a huge relief. They love it here and we’re looking forward to continuing with the program through the summer.”

During the event Erin Kelley, interim executive director of YMCA’s New Haven Youth Center and Hamden/North Haven announced the program and the funding has “allowed us to open our doors wider and broaden our programming outreach. This summer we’re expanding and will accommodate up to 80 additional kids and families in four new locations including Bethel A.M.E. Church, Beula Heights First Pentacostal Church, New Hope Baptist Church, and Iglesia Cristiana Estrella Resplandeciente de Jacob/Radiant Star of Jacob Church.”

YMCA Coastal Connecticut currently operates Learning Hubs in its New Haven Youth Center and also partners with First Calvary Baptist Church in Newhallville, Solar Youth in West Rock, and Upon This Rock Ministries in Fair Haven to provide staffing.

The New Haven Learning Hubs Collective is a citywide, grassroots, volunteer-driven network to support New Haven children, youth, and families experiencing educational inequities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Current locations include: Boys and Girls Club, ConnCAT Safe Space in Newhallville, First Calvary Baptist Church in Newhallville, Solar Youth in West Rock, YMCA Youth Center and Upon This Rock Ministries in Fair Haven.

Children eligible to attend a Learning Hub must be New Haven residents in Kindergarten through 9th grades, registered for the New Haven Public Schools, and demonstrate high need. The program is completely free for children and families. Parents and caregivers who are interested in a spot for their children can apply [here](#).

Clifford Beers, a non-profit providing mental and behavioral health services to children and families, provides administrative support and mental health consultation and training for the New Haven Learning Hubs Collective. “The Learning Hubs have been an amazing resource for families to receive free care before, during and after school hours amidst the pandemic. So many families struggle with reliable internet or to afford things like technology and child care. The Hubs fills those needs. It has been an honor of Clifford Beers to be a part of the Learning Hubs Collective and we hope to see this program continue to thrive and flourish in the future,” said Alice Forrester, CEO, Clifford Beers.

National Emergency Grant funding expires on September 1 or when fully spent. Eligible candidates must be unemployed or under-employed or unable to return to their previous job because of the

pandemic. To apply visit: <https://www.workforcealliance.biz/training-assistance/portal/> Community organizations can contact Vicki Gelpke at (203) 867-4030 x 267 vgelpke@workforcealliance.biz

About Workforce Alliance

Workforce Alliance is the policy and oversight organization responsible for creating a comprehensive, community-wide response to the challenges of building a highly skilled workforce in South Central CT, which comprises 30 towns. Board members include business owners, local elected officials and community leaders in order to meet changing local needs and shifting national economic and workforce trends. Workforce Alliance oversees four American Job Center South Central CT locations in New Haven, Meriden, Middletown and Hamden. For more information visit workforcealliance.biz

South Central CT includes 30 towns: Bethany, Branford, Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, East Haven, Essex, Guilford, Haddam Hamden, Killingworth, Madison, Meriden, Middlefield, Middletown, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Old Saybrook, Orange, Portland, Wallingford, West Haven, Westbrook and Woodbridge.

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