



ABCD Press

From the Office of Public Information

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ABCD Calls for Increase in Summer Jobs Funding For Most At-risk Youth

More Teens Seeking Jobs; Concern about Street Violence Reaching New Heights

By mid-April more than 1,000 teenagers had turned in applications for summer jobs at Action for Boston Community Development, almost double the number received at that point in 2006. At the same time, resources for the ABCD SummerWorks program which serves 14-to-21-year-olds from low-income households, may be significantly less than in previous years.

With violence escalating in city neighborhoods, ABCD calls on the federal and state governments, private sector companies and individuals to help out and ensure that youngsters from inner-city neighborhoods have opportunities to work and learn this summer.

“Last year ABCD had enough funding to put 1,100 youngsters to work across the city and more than 3,000 teenagers applied for those jobs. This year – with more kids applying and even greater concern for keeping them off the streets – we hope to do better,” said ABCD President/CEO Bob Coard. “We are hoping that the state and the city and private companies will provide more funds to the high-risk, inner-city, low-income teenagers served by ABCD SummerWorks. We are the only summer jobs program that exclusively serves families below the federal poverty level. We are one of the few programs that serves CORI involved youngsters.”

Coard noted that this year – given the epidemic of street violence affecting young people – there is a need to target youngsters from the most at-risk neighborhoods through massive outreach efforts and place them in jobs within a strong support system. He pointed out that ABCD SummerWorks, with its winning combination of paid jobs, education, mentoring and tutoring, offers the hope and opportunity that can make a difference.

“In the 1980s, ABCD served at least 5,000 youngsters every summer,” said Coard. One year – when Jerry Ford was President and the nation was threatened with riots – we received enough federal funding to put 10,000 kids to work and we did so without a hitch.” He pointed out that ABCD has the infrastructure in place to expand the program at a moment’s notice.

Last year ABCD SummerWorks placed 1,100 teen workers in jobs at over 250 non-profit organizations including hospitals, health centers, museums, child care centers, day camps, government agencies and other sites. SummerWorks youths also participated in work-readiness and career-oriented workshops and were mentored by adults from the public and private sectors.

SummerWorks is part of ABCD's Youth Explorations program which brings together ABCD youth programs in education, employment, career exploration and recreation to create year-round initiatives focused on meeting the needs of the city's most at-risk young people.

Those interested in helping to put inner-city youngsters to work this year can call 617-348-6236 or go to www.bostonabcd.org, click on Support ABCD and go to Youth Explorations.

ABCD serves more than 100,000 low-income Boston and Greater Boston residents through its central offices and a decentralized neighborhood network of Area Planning Action Councils (APACs) and Neighborhood Service Centers (NSCs). ABCD programs and affiliations include Fuel Assistance; Child Care Services; Head Start; Child Care Choices of Boston; Education; Career Development; Housing and Homelessness Services; Health Services; Family Planning; Urban College of Boston; University Alternative High School; William J. Ostiguy High for youngsters with drug and/or alcohol abuse issues; Weatherization; Foster Grandparents; a Holiday Toy Drive; Elder Services; Intergenerational Programs; an Independent Living Program serving people with disabilities; an Independent Development Account (IDA) asset development program; management of four payroll deduction fundraising campaigns reaching out to more than 200,000 city, state, federal and private sector employees and benefiting approximately 2,000 non-profit organizations; advocacy and consumer services.

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