



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stimulus Monies Benefit Peninsula Youth

Paid summer work experiences in supervised job settings available

Newport News, VA - - Investing in economic recovery means investments in the future workforce of America. This is one of the major provisions of President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) that is benefiting both in-school and out-of-school youth in the Greater Peninsula region. According to Recovery.Gov, the provision sets aside \$53 billion dollars nationally, specifically for training and education. This includes approximately \$847,000 for the creation of employment opportunities for youth, age 14-24 on the Greater Peninsula who meet the eligibility requirements of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); this program is run by the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development's (PCFWD), which consolidates, coordinates, and improves employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs, through a host of community partners.

The PCFWD and its workforce partners are utilizing the funding for summer job creation opportunities, in the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg and the Counties of Gloucester, James City and York County. "The Summer Youth Program has clear goals to help build a pipeline of workers for our regional businesses," said William Mann, executive vice president of the PCFWD. "It's designed so that we can support youth in developing work readiness skills and effective work habits and behaviors, while earning a paycheck and learning about the world of work firsthand."

Why is this so important? Research shows from year-to-year that businesses want employees with good soft skills that are work ready. The 2006 report findings from *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge And Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century Workforce* show nearly three-quarters of businesses surveyed (70 percent)

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cite deficiencies among incoming high school graduates in "applied" skills, such as professionalism and work ethic, defined as "demonstrating personal accountability and effective work habits", i.e. punctuality, working productively with others, and time and workload management. Similar findings were reported in the 2008 National Association of Colleges and Employers report, summarizing that employers find the current employee pool lacking in face-to-face communication skills, writing skills, presentation skills, teamwork skills, and overall interpersonal skills, as well as good work ethic and the ability to multitask.

“Recovering from an economic perspective means that we have to invest in our youth and prepare them with the work readiness skills most needed by our regional employers,” said PCFWD President and CEO Matthew James. “The Summer Youth Employment Program is a major boost to the foundational work that we’ve been developing through our Youth Career Café, and will greatly benefit both our regional youth and our business community.”

Most opportunities will offer \$7.25 per hour, 32 hours per week, 4 – 8 weeks of work experience, and convenient site placement, if possible. The success of this program will be measured by the attainment of work readiness skills, with guidelines established by the Department of Labor.

For more information, check out our YouTube video at http://www.pcfwd.org/summer_youth_employment_program.asp

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