

NEW BRITAIN

Grant helps local youth programs

Capital Workforce Partners able to increase summer enrollment

By George Moore
Herald Staff

NEW BRITAIN — A new state grant will drastically increase the number of slots for the Summer Youth Employment and Education Program, which provides young people from low-income families constructive activities during their summer break.

The program, administered by Hartford-based Capital Workforce Partners, will boost slots in New Britain from 80 last year to over 250 this summer, said Dennis Mink, CWP's coordinator for the program.

The six-week program was funded by a \$1.3 million state grant this year; after federal funding for service became scarce, Mink said. There have also been significant private sector contributions.

Open to in-school students eligible for free or reduced lunch, the program employs young people part-time for part of the week, then sits them down for classes that teach pertinent job skills.

"The youth get prepared to actually go through high school with a positive concept of what they want to do," said Paulette Fox, executive director of the Opportunities Industrialization Center, which has held the program for 26 years now.

While CWP oversees the program in the Hartford region, it is carried out locally by social service agencies. In New Britain, Youth Employment and Education slots are being offered by the Human Resources Agency, OIC and the Board of Education working with Central Connecticut State University.

HRA, which hasn't held the program in a few years, was selected by CWP as the lead agency in New Britain. HRA planner Beth Kimmer said the agency will send students to a number of nonprofit organizations for work, including the Urban Oaks organic farm and neighborhood revitalization zones.

"Generally, these kids are looking for something productive to do," she said.

While the subsidized jobs pay minimum wage, the program is not just about getting young people paychecks.

Students will spend at least three hours a week for the competency-based learning plan that includes instruction on how to write resumes, customer service skills, computer skills and job retention strategies. Additionally, students will write a "dream resume" for a job in which they would like to see themselves in the future.

The deadline to sign up for the program has been extended to June 22 and the program begins in July. There will be 1,600 slots for the program available in the entire Hartford region this summer, according to CWP.

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THE HARTFORD COURANT

TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2006

AREA-WIDE

Youth Work Program Taking Applications

The Human Resources Agency of New Britain is accepting applications for the Summer Youth Employment & Learning Program.

Applicants must be 14-18 years old and be attending school. The program is open to residents of New Britain, Berlin and Bristol. Income eligibility is required (free or reduced lunch). Participants will be paid either a weekly stipend or hourly rate for 20 hours per week. Participants will gain valuable work experience, learn about the world of work and participate in classroom activities as well. Applications are available at the guidance departments at New Britain and E. C. Goodwin high schools, or call 860-223-0889. The application deadline is Friday.

HRA is also hiring a coordinator to oversee the five individual programs in New Britain, Berlin and Bristol. In HRA's program, positions are available for three teachers/supervisors who will lead groups of 15 students in the classroom once per week and perform project work four days per week. In addition, volunteers are needed to assist the teachers and provide