

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Benjamin Johnson
Phone: (614) 466-2100
E-mail: benjamin.johnson@jfs.ohio.gov

Youth Workforce Award Winners Announced

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2010 Youth Program Excellence Award. This award recognizes the quality of Ohio’s best Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funded youth programs. WIA youth programs prepare young Ohioans for education and the workforce. The winning programs showcase excellent design, implementation and results.

Five programs have been selected to receive the 2010 Youth Program Excellence Award:

Lead the Way, J. Ashburn Jr. Youth Center, Franklin County

The Next Level Program, Literacy Center West, Hamilton County

Youth Opportunities Summer Employment Program, MALACHI, Clermont County

Monroe County Summer Youth Program

Pyramid Club, Community Services of Stark County

“The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is honored to recognize these outstanding WIA youth programs,” said ODJFS Director Douglas Lumpkin. “WIA youth programs around the state improve lives and strengthen the economy by putting young Ohioans on the path to steady employment.”

WIA youth programs provide services to Ohioans between the ages of 14 and 21 who face barriers to employment, education and successful transition to adulthood. Summer employment programs, mentoring, dropout prevention and leadership development are just a few of the services offered through WIA youth programs, which are available in all 88 counties through Ohio’s network of One-Stop Centers.

Winning programs were nominated by their local workforce investment areas and were assessed based on a variety of criteria, including excellence in programs and activities, management, youth leadership and involvement, and continuous improvement.

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Editor’s Note: A list of recipients and brief descriptions of their programs is attached.

Youth Program Excellence Award Recipients

Lead the Way, J. Ashburn Jr. Youth Center, Franklin County

A year-round youth program funded through the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation in Franklin County and offered at the J. Ashburn Jr. Youth Center, Lead the Way provides educational enrichment and internship opportunities for students with physical, sensory or learning disabilities. The program is a replica of the High School High Tech program, a national initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. Youth with disabilities are exposed to mentors and role models with disabilities, and are given hands-on tutoring, homework assistance, leadership opportunities, workforce development and summer employment opportunities.

The Next Level Program, Literacy Center West, Hamilton County

Funded through the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board, the Next Level annually serves nearly 100 WIA-eligible young men and women aged 17-21. The program is modeled after the highly successful City of Cincinnati "Street to Work" job program. All participants receive job placement, GED preparation and career advancement assistance. Additionally, the program offers individualized workshops and self-directed academic tutoring as part of its empowerment and leadership activities. By focusing on developing youth character and civic responsibility, The Next Level also assists youth to become productive and contributing citizens in their communities.

Youth Opportunities Summer Employment Program, MALACHI, Clermont County

Middletown Adolescent Leaders Achieve, commonly known as MALACHI, is a repeat Youth Program Excellence Award recipient. It first received this award in 2007. MALACHI's Youth Opportunities Program works closely with Butler County Workforce One to set realistic educational and employment goals for participants. For years, MALACHI has run an effective summer youth program that is linked to occupational goals and enriched with academic and occupational learning opportunities. Young people often contribute ideas through the Youth Advisory Board, occasionally have membership on MALACHI's Board of Trustees, and are often called on to speak at community events.

Monroe County Summer Youth Program, Monroe County

Operated by Jobs Etc, the Summer Youth Program successfully promotes the inclusion of hard-to-serve populations, youth with disabilities, offenders, and out-of-school youth. Staff work with school guidance counselors and teachers, juvenile probation officers, program mentors, and employers to provide opportunities for young people to experience the world of work, explore careers and develop skills. Youth are often provided with opportunities to perform community service projects, speak in front of groups of peers and adults, and work in team units.

Pyramid Club, Community Services of Stark County

A collaboration between Community Services of Stark County and the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority, Pyramid Club provides paid after-school job training, career exploration and summer employment opportunities to at-risk youth in the 11th and 12th grades. Funded through WIA and the United Way of Greater Stark County, Pyramid Club provides homeless youth, youth in foster homes, and youth living in low-income housing with comprehensive assessments, job-readiness and life readiness activities and individualized, supportive services. Case management practices encompass empowerment principles, unconditional mentorship and guidance that move beyond basic referral services.