



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Strong Women, Families, and Communities
Erin J. Murphy, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

April 30, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Strong Women, Families, and Communities was referred the following docket for consideration:

Docket #0887, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Four Million One Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$4,149,200.00) in the form of a grant for the YouthWorks Grant, awarded by the MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development for be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund a Summer and School Year jobs program that will provide leadership development, skills training, and career exploration for low-income at-risk youth ages 14-25.

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and was referred to the Committee on April 16, 2025.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #0887, is an order requesting authorization to accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$4,149,200.00 for the purpose of supporting a summer and school-year jobs program that provides leadership development, skills training, and career exploration for low-income and at-risk youth ages 14 to 25. The grant will be administered by the Office of Workforce Development and will fund employment placements, youth wages, support services, and related administrative oversight and training.

Information Received at Hearing

The Committee held a hearing on Thursday, April 24, 2025 to discuss Docket #0887. The Committee heard testimony from Joseph Le, Chief of Staff, Office of Workforce Development and Anna Sherr, Assistant Deputy Director, Grants Management, Office of Workforce Development.

The Administration provided a detailed overview of the Youth Works grant, explaining that it is a state-funded initiative managed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and administered locally through Commonwealth Corporation in partnership with Boston's Office of Workforce Development. The Administration explained that funds allocated through this grant flow from the State to sixteen regional workforce boards, including the City of Boston's, which annually collaborates with several community organizations and City departments to maximize outreach and effectiveness. It was stated that this year's grant would support over a thousand young people in both summer and school-year employment programs that will offer meaningful career and educational experiences, including specialized roles such as paraprofessional positions at the Horace Mann School for



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the Deaf, as well as apprenticeships in fields like biotechnology, where participants can earn college credits.

Further elaborating on grant allocation, the Administration clarified that most of the funds directly finance youth wages and support services provided by various sub-recipient organizations, while a smaller portion of the grant supports administrative activities, such as training, oversight, and technical assistance conducted by the Office of Workforce Development. Regarding partnerships, the Administration highlighted the City's collaboration with Wentworth Institute of Technology and YouthBuild Boston for an industry-focused career exploration program, as well as a "Digital Ready" program that immerses youth in biotech labs, thus demonstrating the grant's value in facilitating tangible post-secondary opportunities.

Regarding selection and participation, Councilors sought greater clarity on the process by which young people are identified and matched with appropriate work sites, questioning whether youth with limited English proficiency or those from undocumented communities could participate. In response, the Administration explained that while the grant funding itself does not support undocumented youth, the City leverages other funding sources and community partnerships to address this gap. Further discussion involved questions about the application process; specifically, Councilors questioned whether distinctions in funding would result in differences in how opportunities are presented to youth. The Administration assured Councilors that all applicants encounter a uniform and streamlined public-facing application portal. It was explained that behind-the-scenes distinctions in funding allocation do not affect the user experience; rather, opportunities are simply filtered based on criteria such as language needs and accessibility.

Councilors expressed strong support for the grant, emphasizing its role in equipping young people with essential skills and experiences needed for successful futures. Regarding unanswered questions posed by the Council, the Administration agreed to provide additional follow-up information, including detailed data on youth with disabilities served, comprehensive lists of programs at the Horace Mann School, and a breakdown of all sources of funding involved in the Youth Works initiative.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Strong Women, Families, and Communities I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that this matter **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Erin J. Murphy, Chair
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