



2025 Request for Responses

REQUEST FOR FIRSTJOBS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH WAGE REIMBURSEMENT

What is FIRSTJOBS?

The FirstJobs initiative promotes summer employment for North Shore youth ages 14 to 21. Firstjobs is a workforce development program that includes oversight and assistance from MassHire North Shore Youth Career Center (NSYCC), The MassHire-North Shore Workforce Board (NSWB), and the worksite.

Firstjobs operates through a three-pronged approach.

- ★ First, local businesses are encouraged to hire youth directly at their companies.
- ★ Second, state resources, mainly “YouthWorks” funds are allocated to MassHire to subsidize youth wages at eligible worksites.
- ★ Finally, local businesses, philanthropies and individuals are asked to contribute to the Firstjobs Fund at the Essex County Community Foundation so that youth can be hired by additional local public and non-profit agencies.

Public and Non-Profit Agencies that are interested in hiring youth for summer work may apply to be part of our program, which includes reimbursements for wages paid to the eligible/enrolled youth. It is important to note that jobs developed/funded through FirstJobs will be filled by the NSYCC staff who will screen & prepare eligible participants for interviews and refer youth to appropriate jobs. Youth hired at the worksite must meet the eligibility requirements in order to receive reimbursement for their wages.

FirstJobs/Youthworks is a program sponsored by Commonwealth Corporation and is not intended to be a philanthropic grant to the organization/worksite. The program reimburses wages for youth and assists those youth in their career development.

Accepted youth must take part in a series of job readiness workshops to prepare them to enter the workforce and to successfully maintain a job. It is important that any organizations participating in Firstjobs are cooperative with this process, including allowing the youth time to attend these workshops. A schedule and explanation of workshops will be provided to the worksite in the orientation at the beginning of summer. The YCC will assist worksites in the development of the required MA Work Based Learning Plan (WBLP) which is a pre & post assessment tool to evaluate youth performance on the job. The YCC will also assist, if requested by the worksite, with job performance issues related to the youth.

- ★ **Organizations applying for F1rstJobs funds must agree to the terms of this program in order to be eligible for funds. Organizations that do not comply with the program requirements in a timely manner will not be funded.**

FIRSTJOBS APPLICATION GUIDELINES

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

- Public agencies of local or state government, including schools
- Non-profit organizations - must be recognized as tax exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Organizations with a pending application for 501 (c) (3) status, and new or informal groups with a qualified fiscal sponsor, are also considered.
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501 (c) (3) status but use a fiscal sponsor.

**In the case of an applying agency using a fiscal sponsor, the private non - profit agency serving as the fiscal agent must have been determined to be tax - exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Documentation of this determination should be attached to the application as well as a letter from the Executive Director/President of the sponsoring organization indicating their commitment to serve as fiscal sponsor.*

FUNDING PURPOSE:

- Provide career exploration and readiness opportunities to youth ages 14-21. These will be supported and guided by NSYCC staff.
- Encourage youth to develop the life skills that will prepare them for successful future careers.
- To provide employment opportunities which allow youth to learn about careers & begin thinking about their future career development.

Program Structure

- Well-supervised first-time or early employment opportunities
- Part time employment for **up to 120 hours** (Adjusted in 2025) depending on their age and tier. Due to the nature of regional employment, there may be limited opportunities available for youth ages 14-15.

FUNDING PRIORITY:

Based on the guidelines above and the limited availability of funds, MassHire North Shore has established the following priorities of the F1rstjobs program:

1. Priority Cities:
 - a. The North Shore “Gateway Cities” have priority for funding: Salem, Lynn, and Peabody. Gloucester is considered a “Priority City” despite not being a Gateway City.
 - b. Additional cities in our region will be considered 2nd priority for funding (in no particular order) Manchester, Topsfield, Swampscott, Beverly, Wenham, Hamilton, Ipswich, Middleton, Lynnfield, Danvers, Marblehead, Saugus, Rockport, Essex and Nahant.
2. Focus on youth development:
 - a. Worksites that focus on positive youth development will be first priority for funding. This includes sites that offer continued employment opportunities for youth as they grow, as well as mentorship and learning opportunities. Worksites that provide additional holistic services will also be considered a priority.
 - b. Worksites with other varying missions, such as those that offer one-time employment opportunities, will be 2nd priority for funding.

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS:

Worksites are asked to select a “Tier” of employment for any youth role proposed. The Tier descriptions are below. Typical summer placements for 16-21 year old participants are “Tier 2”. Tiers 1 & 3 are specific programs for specific age groups and programs. This year the North Shore will not offer a “Tier 4” as in previous years.

Please note that the program has evolved over the last several years and the youth participants now have variation in the type of wage and expectations.

See below chart for wage requirements. As a reference, for the typical summer jobs that have taken place in this program in prior years, the majority would be considered “Tier 2”. If you have questions on which Tier your program may fall, please contact Josh Crowder jcrowder@masshire-northshorewb.com

Tier 1: Service and Project-Based Learning: <i>Signal Success:</i> Starting off Strong	Tier 2: Early and Career-Trajectory Experience <i>Signal Success:</i> Building a Professional Self
14-15-year-old participants	16-17-year-old participants
Summer: 60-150hrs	Summer: 100-240hrs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal Success Tier 1 Training Curriculum • Case management and wrap-around services, as needed • Service-learning projects coordinated with local community partners and/or supportive small group introductory work placements • Sector aligned project-based learning intensives with additional supports for younger participants • Cohort-based case management • Match participants with learning opportunities that foster transferable skills and early career pipeline programming with specific employer partnerships • Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage • Optional- in person job shadowing on specific jobs and careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal Success Tier 2 Training Curriculum • Case management and wrap-around services, as needed • Introduction to career exploration through volunteerism and civic engagement • Introduction to targeted transferable skill development • Begin career pathway planning • Interview practice and individual personal branding focused on skills, interests, and assets. Consider Peer Leadership opportunities to support growth opportunities that involve increased independence, and/or stronger alignment to career interests • Defined career exploration activities that support increased awareness of in-demand industries • Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage • Optional- CPR/First Aid training

Tier 1: Service and Project-Based Learning: <i>Signal Success:</i> Starting off Strong	Tier 2: Early and Career-Trajectory Experience <i>Signal Success:</i> Building a Professional Self
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional: Engage participants in additional topic specific learning opportunities that correlate with age and stage • Optional- CPR/First Aid training 	

Tier 3: Career Pathway Training and Support: <i>Signal Success:</i> Crafting a Career Path
18-21-year-old participants
Summer: 120-340hrs
<p>Tier 2 components, plus,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal Success Tier 3 Training Curriculum • Case management and wrap -around services, as needed • Occupational training models with relevant industry certification, including exploring Interplay Learning careers in the Trades • Mentorship via professionals in field of interest • Work-based learning and skills training linked to pre - apprenticeship certification • Match participants with employment and learning opportunities that foster transferable skills • Engage participant in leadership opportunities • Interview practice and individual personal branding focused on skills, interests, and assets • Support developing a Personal Resume • Job placements focused on a particular industry, supported by career awareness and exploration activities • Focus on marketable skills and increased opportunity • Skills to find and keep an unsubsidized job • Skills, exposure, and experience to obtain entry-level positions in high-demand fields and make informed career decisions • Collaborative and teamwork activities

Tier 3: Career Pathway Training and Support: *Signal Success:* Crafting a Career Path

- Optional: CPR/First-Aid training
- Optional: design Micro Career Pathway comparable courses that align with Connecting Activities programming

**Tier 4 will not be included in 2025 programming*

GEOGRAPHY:

FIRSTJOBS is intended for summer employment opportunities serving youth from the North Shore area.

The North Shore area is defined as 19 cities and towns indicated on our map.

This program maintains geographical priorities. Please refer to “Funding Priority” above for more information.



ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT:

MassHire NSWB requires that the worksites adhere to the following guidelines:

- The management staff overseeing the positions should have considerable supervisory and administrative experience.
- There should be involvement of the sponsoring agency's Executive Director/ Board of Directors in the planning and monitoring of the summer positions and any associated program(s).
- The agencies should be fiscally sound, with a balanced budget, and able to fulfill the commitments outlined in the grant application.
- An orientation should be provided by the hiring agency for all youth. This should include organizational philosophy, the needs of the clients served, and the responsibilities of the position. Agencies need to be prepared to provide the special screening, supervision, and training considering these are first time opportunities for youth employees.
- Agency serving as worksite must agree to regular communication with the MassHire team, including timely completion of hiring, sharing of eligibility documents, and timely submission of invoices.

NONSECTARIAN PROGRAMMING:

FIRSTJOBS grant funding is limited to non-sectarian programs and positions. Programs or positions sponsored by religious organizations are eligible, provided enrollment is open to

individuals of all religious and ethnic backgrounds and the program or position responsibilities are free of mandatory religious instruction, worship, or other sectarian activities.

ACCREDITATION and CERTIFICATION:

- Day camp programs applying for a grant must meet Department of Public Health licensing requirements.
- Residential camps should meet American Camping Association (ACA) accreditation standards. Documentation of licensing or accreditation should be attached to the application.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

Funding for F1rstJobs is received from several grant sources that include specific eligibility components. This includes state and federal funding as well as funding from private businesses or foundations.

It is important to note that our funding comes from the State of MA “YouthWorks” grant. This grant requires specific eligibility documentation that **MUST** be completed prior to youth beginning work. The NSYCC staff will complete this process, but will require assistance from agency staff to complete in a timely manner. This program maintains priority for funding for youth who are low income, are at risk, or have a current IEP, or meet certain barriers, and all youth must be eligible to work in the US.

If your agency wishes to refer youth for a specific start date, the youth **MUST** complete the application and eligibility process by **Friday June 20, 2025.**

Organizations applying for funding should have interested youth complete the F1rstjobs application online during the spring and not wait until the organization has been granted funds. This allows for the youth to complete the eligibility process and be ready to work once grants are announced. Should the sending organization not be granted, the youth will still have the opportunity to apply for positions within the program at other organizations. The goal of this program is to provide increased opportunity for youth to obtain employment, and they must have a completed application in order to be considered. No hiring decisions, however, should be made until official grant announcements. Wages for youth who begin working prior to completion of eligibility will NOT be reimbursed.

TIME SHEETS:

- The Agency must keep complete and accurate time sheets for all youth, to be signed weekly by the youth AND supervisor.
- The YCC will provide a basic time sheet that may be used if you do not have a timesheet.
- Unsigned time sheets will not be accepted.
- Time Sheets must be submitted with invoicing.

INVOICING:

All youth will be paid directly from their worksite which will be the employer of record. Any disbursement of funds under the program will be made on a cost-reimbursement basis and in accordance with the guidelines in this RFR. Funding will be granted via an Award Letter, generated from MassHire North Shore Workforce Board. This requires that all youth be paid via the payroll of the worksite. No other costs, such as supervisory staff, membership fees, payroll company fees etc. will be reimbursed. This process will require invoices be submitted to the MHNSWB for payment. Invoices must follow the guidelines below, and are subject to review prior to reimbursement. As this process requires the cooperation of the agency fiscal staff, we

require that the fiscal staff sign off on this application and provide their contact information. The NSWB reimburses wages paid to eligible youth, and details are outlined in writing upon award. The NSWB requires all agencies submit invoices at least once a month. The invoice package must include the following documents:

1. Invoice Worksheet – showing employee name, hours worked and fringe for the period. – This excel template will be provided by the North Shore WB (after grants are announced)
2. Time sheets – which agrees to the summary spreadsheet *Note: Time sheets must be included in invoice package to verify the wages paid.*
3. Payroll register – which agrees to the summary spreadsheet
4. Invoices should be sent as one complete document whenever possible, rather than multiple attachments.
5. Invoices are now submitted via online form. Link will be sent to all awardees.

Invoice Due dates:

- July Invoice – Due Friday, August 15, 2025
- August Invoice – Due Friday September 15, 2025

Invoice details and instructions will be sent to successful bidders with grant notification.

FINAL INVOICES:

- Final invoice must be submitted no later than Friday, September 15, 2025.
- The NSWB reserves the right to withhold payment to organizations that do not comply with the application and invoicing process.

FORMAT AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATIONS:

A FirstJobs application consists of:

- Online form submission, with basic agency information
- Program budget- Form 1 of this packet, to be uploaded to online form
- Job descriptions- Form 2 of this packet, to be uploaded to online form. If more than one position is available, please complete separate Job Descriptions for each job title.
- New in 2025 Applicants should include in their budget the fringe rate and basis for fringe calculation. (Workers comp policy, etc.) This will simplify the invoicing process.
- For new applicants only, a copy of your nonprofit status form, uploaded to online form.
- Incomplete applications will not be reviewed until complete.

To ensure timely review of applications, applicants **should not** include additional information/documentation such as staff resumes, letters of support, etc. unless specifically requested by the NSWB. First time respondents will be asked to submit additional information AFTER completion of the online application.

Please note: Application budgets should include wages paid to youth, minimum wage payments for hours as appropriate for their age and tier. Applicants should propose positions that they can fill noting that they will receive financial support **ONLY** for the wages paid to the youth.

Firstjobs does not support wages of adult supervisors or overhead costs. Agencies wishing to hire youth at a higher wage or for more hours may do so, with the understanding that the difference must be paid by the agency.

Grant award letters will be sent in early June. Please note that all awards are based on available funds and no guarantee of funding shall be made prior to the official award letter.

FIRSTJOBS GRANTEES:

Once awarded, the worksite is expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **New for 2025-** All approved worksites will be **REQUIRED** to attend a brief virtual program orientation in June where the award letter and program requirements will be discussed. **Award letters will be sent AFTER the worksite has completed the virtual session to review the award requirements.**
- Organizations applying for FirstJobs funding must at least the pay State minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour. Although there are exemptions to this wage, youth working under this program are not considered exempt and must be paid at least the MA minimum wage. Payroll registers must indicate that the correct wage is paid to all youth.
- These positions require youth to work part-time hours per week during the summer, after July 7, 2025 and ending by August 29th, 2025. Youth hours and expectations are outlined by age and tier.
- There will be a separate zoom meeting for information for the invoicing procedures. All approved worksites will be **REQUIRED** to send your agency's fiscal staff or the person(s) responsible for collecting time sheets and creating the invoices.
- The NSYCC and/or NSWB staff will work with your agency staff to assist with completion of online application as well as eligibility. Worksite staff are expected to assist in this process for timely submission in order for youth to begin work.
- Youth hired under this program must adhere to guidelines of career readiness workshop participation. Workshops will be provided virtually via Zoom or in person, and some of the content will be self-paced online where applicable. Worksite staff may also be trained to present the workshops in person. Worksite supervisors are expected to assist with coordination of these workshops. Youth should be paid for these workshop hours.
- The NSYCC will assist in the completion of the MA Work Based Learning Plan for youth employees- site cooperation is required.
- If an agency is aware of youth seeking summer positions the agency must refer those youth to the NSYCC to complete the application process and **REQUIRED** job readiness workshops.
- ALL youth must complete the application process by Friday, June 20, 2025.
- Agencies should not hire a youth or promise employment under FirstJobs to youth who have not completed the full application process.
- Hours worked prior to youth eligibility completion, or after August 29, 2025, will not be reimbursed.
- Youth with little or no job experience will have priority for job placement.

SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS:

Process and timetable for Submission and Review

- Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis from April 22nd through May 16, 2025, with no applications accepted after **Friday, May 16, 2025.**
- **Applications should be submitted in electronic format, in our new online form.**
- The NSWB will contact you if additional documentation is required.

- Please only submit the requested information and do not include additional agency information, such as resumes, etc. unless specified in this RFP.
- The application should include responses to the online form questions, application budget, and job descriptions. Please do **not** include these instruction pages in your submission.

If necessary, contact Josh Crowder (jcrowder@masshire-northshorewb.com) via email **only**. **Please do not call with inquiries on this RFP. All questions must be submitted via email. Questions may be submitted until May 2nd, 2025.**

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA:

F1rstJobs will determine grant amounts based upon funds available this spring. Applicants should base their requests on an honest assessment of their supervisory capability and organizational/program needs. The F1rstJobs Review Committee looks for applications that fall within the F1rst Jobs Priorities and Objectives, and meet the needs of North Shore area youth. When reviewing the applications, our staff considers the information about the job descriptions and the organization as a whole. Overall, we are looking for:

- A. Applications should be complete and written with clarity.
- B. Positions that meet a documented need, are dedicated to the safety, education and enrichment of youth as well as the organization, are well planned and provide appropriate supervision, and meet the **F1RSTJOBS** objectives outlined above.
- C. Organizations that have the capacity to support the proposed positions, exhibit the organizational management characteristics outlined above, including a sound financial plan, and fiscal oversight.
- D. Organizations that have the ability and/or prior experience in submitting required documents, including time sheets and invoices, in a timely manner.

HOW TO APPLY:

1.	VIEW the online form application and related documents at https://masshire-northshorewb.com/wib-rfp/
2.	If you have questions, submit via email prior to 5/02/25.
3.	Prepare a plan for teen employees this summer
4.	Complete Form 1- Budget
5.	Complete Form 2- Job Descriptions
6.	COMPLETE the online form application at https://forms.gle/LJCHG8FosPrdKWKZ8
7.	Upload the completed Budget, Form 1
8.	Upload the completed Job Description, Form 2
9.	For new applicants, upload the agency nonprofit status letter or fiscal agent letter.

10.	Check email for confirmation that your form has been submitted. All forms must be submitted by May 16, 2025.
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