

## Workforce Opportunities for Older Youth

### AmeriCorps

Each year AmeriCorps volunteers meet critical service needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security, and other areas through nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and faith-based organizations nationwide. Members tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, clean parks and streams, and recruit, train, and manage community volunteers for small community groups to nationally known organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, the Red Cross, and Boys and Girls Clubs of America. In return for their service, AmeriCorps members receive an AmeriCorps Education Award. AmeriCorps membership is open to U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents age 17 and older. Members serve full or part time over a 10- to 12-month period. Upon successful completion of their service, members receive an AmeriCorps Education Award of up to \$4,725 to pay for college or graduate school or to pay back qualified student loans. During their service, members receive health coverage, training, and student loan deferment. About half the members also receive a modest annual living allowance. As an AmeriCorps member, you will gain experience that translates directly into job experience in your chosen field. You will learn teamwork, communication, responsibility, and other essential skills that will help you for the rest of your life. Some youth find their AmeriCorps year to provide them with more experience and skills than they would have gotten in a traditional, paying job.

Members who serve part time receive a partial AmeriCorps Education Award. The **College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007** created two new federal programs: a new Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and a new Income-Based Repayment plan (IBR) for the repayment of federal loans. The new Income-Based Repayment plan helps to make repaying education loans more affordable for low-income borrowers, such as an AmeriCorps member living on a stipend; AmeriCorps service is also recognized as equivalent to a public service job for the purposes of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. To learn more, go to this link: [http://www.americorps.gov/for\\_individuals/overview/index.asp](http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/overview/index.asp)

### Job Corps

Job Corps is a career technical training and education program for young people age 16-24 that qualify as low income. It is a voluntary program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. Job Corps offers the opportunity to earn a high school diploma or a HiSet for those youth who don't have either. For youth who already have a high school diploma, Job Corps can help them prepare for college through partnerships with local colleges. Courses in independent living, employability skills, and social skills are offered to all Job Corps students in order to help them make the transition into the workplace. While enrolled in the program, students receive housing, meals, basic medical care and biweekly living allowances. Corps graduates receive transitional support services, including help locating housing, child care and transportation, for up to 18 months after they leave the program. Missouri has three locations. More information can be found at: <http://www.jobcorps.gov/Home.aspx>

### US Military

There are also opportunities for employment in the US military. Enlisted service members make up the majority of the Military and perform much of the hands-on work. Before serving in the Military, there are a few things a young adult can do to prepare. The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) Career Exploration Program can help young adults discover

suitable jobs. To enlist, you must meet certain physical requirements and must be 18 years old, or 17 with parental consent. Youth must also have graduated from high school, although a High School Equivalency Test (HiSet) certificate is sometimes acceptable. The military offers training and benefits. Once committed to service, training begins in the form of boot camp (officially called Initial Entry Training). College students interested in entering the Service as officers may elect to enroll in their school's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program or other service-oriented commissioning programs. Military academies and colleges provide another route to a college degree and officer status. To explore more go to this link:  
<http://www.todaysmilitary.com/>

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) specializes in employment and training services that assist individuals with disabilities in becoming employed. A VR counselor will determine eligibility for services. To be eligible, a youth needs to have a physical or mental impairment that causes problems with working and need VR services to be successfully employed. Once eligible, the youth will work with a counselor who will help the youth develop a plan for rehabilitation. Vocational information and guidance is provided:  
<http://dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation>

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit**

Private, for profit businesses across the state that hire nine targeted (including youth in foster care) groups with barriers to employment are eligible for a federal tax credit. The Missouri Department of Economic Development, through Division of Workforce Development, administers the program in the state of Missouri. There is no limit on the number of qualifying new hires per business or total amount of tax credits per year. The forms as well as a fact sheet and brochure may be obtained by visiting the Department of Labor's website at:  
<http://www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/opptax/>  
Information is also available at: [http://missouridevelopment.org/pdfs/dwd\\_wotc.pdf](http://missouridevelopment.org/pdfs/dwd_wotc.pdf)

### **Workforce Investment Boards (WIB)**

Participation on your local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) or attendance at the local meetings is an opportunity for staff to become involved at the community level and to be aware of services that are available for the youth through the Workforce investment Act (WIA). Information on local Workforce Investment Boards is available at:  
[http://www.workforceinvestmentworks.com/workforce\\_board\\_info.asp?st=MO](http://www.workforceinvestmentworks.com/workforce_board_info.asp?st=MO)  
Select Local Workforce Investment Boards to locate one in your region. Each WIB has a Youth Council which is an extension of their board whose primary purpose is to provide expertise in youth policy and to assist local WIBs with program design.

### **Missouri Career Centers and MissouriCareerSource.com**

Missouri Career Centers are located throughout the state and offer resume preparation, career assessment, online training and workshops as well as direct access to Workforce Investment Act Youth Programs. A map of the locations and other information is available at the site:  
<http://jobs.mo.gov/jobseeker/find-a-career-center>  
MissouriCareerSource.org is a statewide web resource that provides information on job fair listings and has a career guide which contains information on exploring careers, top Missouri jobs, interest survey, career alternatives, planning, managing money, job seeking skills, finding

services, and creating a plan of action. Career assistance is offered in such areas as worker resources, disability services, on-line training, job skills assessments, job openings, and financial assistance.

### **State Parks Youth Corp**

Applications for youth 17-25 are typically accepted beginning February 1<sup>st</sup>. Youth in foster care meet eligibility requirements to participate in the program. Participants will earn \$7.25 an hour and will work an average of 400 hours from April 1- November 30. Parks staff and counselors from the state's 14 local Workforce Investment Boards will recruit and select participants. Youth may apply online at: <http://thinkoutside.mo.gov/default.aspx>. Position descriptions and park locations can also be viewed here.

### **Project Xcel**

The Missouri Customer Service Partnership Program is a pilot career readiness program between CD and the Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development in the St. Louis and Springfield areas. The professional training program is designed specifically for young people aging out of foster care or Division of Youth Services custody. Participants receive professional training to introduce them to meaningful careers with opportunities for advancement in customer service occupational fields. Youth participants are prepared to earn employer recognized certificates including the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) offered by ACT, the National Retail Federation's National Professional Certification in Customer Service, and the Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3). In addition to the ten week training, mentoring, support services, and continued learning opportunities are provided for one year. Additional information is available here:

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/chafee/employment-program.htm>

### **Additional information can be found at:**

Tips for Caring Adult: <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2011/cd11-023att.pdf>

Department of Economic Development:

<http://www.ded.mo.gov/Individual/CareerAssistance.aspx>

Missouri State Government: <http://www.mo.gov/work/job-seekers/>

US Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/> US Bureau of Labor Statistics –Employment Projections: <http://www.bls.gov/emp/home.htm>

Perkins Collaborative Resource Network: <http://cte.ed.gov/>

US Department of Labor: <http://www.dol.gov/>

Workman's Compensation: [http://labor.mo.gov/dwc/injured\\_workers](http://labor.mo.gov/dwc/injured_workers)

Unemployment Benefits: <http://www.mo.gov/work/unemployment/>