



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

GEORGE PROAKIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Memorandum

To: Trustees of the Somerville Job Creation & Retention Trust

From: Thomas F. Galligani, Jr., Director of Economic Development

RE: **2020 JCRT GRANTEE RENEWAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Date: July 9, 2021

On April 4, 2019, the JCRT adopted the Somerville Talent Equity Playbook as its strategy to guide investments and align with the City of Somerville workforce development program. In the Spring of 2020, the JCRT issued Requests for Proposals to solicit program ideas to address investment priorities in the areas of Wage Theft/Worker Rights and Job Quality Training, Contextualized Education for Adult & English Language Learners, and Industry Specific Training Programs. The JCRT awarded grants totaling \$868,162 for:

- Wage Theft/Worker Rights and Job Quality Training
 - Somerville Workers Center/The Welcome Project (\$119,000)
- Contextualized Education for English Language & Adult Learners
 - Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) (\$250,000)
 - Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE) – (\$118,933)
- Industry Specific Training Programs.
 - Asian American Civic Association (ACAA) (\$200,000)
 - Just – A—Start (\$113,523)
 - Per Scholas (\$66,706)

All grantee contracts were written to provide the option to renew for an additional 2 year(s), exercisable solely at the discretion of the City. All grantees have expressed an interest in renewing their contracts. One program has completed all its contract terms, another is close to completion, and four are at various stages of progress. All are beginning to plan for the future and would appreciate consideration for a renewal that would allow programming to continue uninterrupted.

Staff have prepared a status summary of each contract with a recommendations on how to proceed. In summary, we recommend:



- Approve a one-year renewal now for: Somerville Workers Center/The Welcome Project worker rights training and Bunker Hill Community College contextualized ESOL customer service training;
- Defer contract renewals for the following programs to closer to their current contact end date: SCALE digital training programs; ACAA industry training programs; Just-A-Start industry training programs; and Per Scholas IT training programs.

Somerville Workers Center (SWC) /The Welcome Project

Program Summary	The SWC proposed to develop and implement workers’ rights and wage theft education for immigrant workers in Somerville. This included the development of wage theft/worker’s rights curriculum and a comprehensive program to educate workers and community members about the updated Somerville Wage Theft Ordinance and other critical worker rights such as safety, protection from discrimination and harassment, paid leave, etc.
Current Status	SWC successfully developed the curriculum, delivered it through 18 classes and workshops to 108 workers, implemented a train-the-trainer program to 7 participants, and raised the visibility of workers rights issues in Somerville. The program is on schedule to complete all contract terms by 8/31/2021.
Challenges	The SWC overcame early challenges related to COVID in-person restrictions. The SWC experienced a minor difficulty obtaining demographic information from workers attending Know Your Rights workshops and experienced employers denying access to outreach workers distributing flyers, especially in construction job sites, convenience stores and restaurant chains. City Staff identified opportunities to enhance the one-hour Know-Your-Rights workshops to provide more detailed, in-depth instruction.
Recommendation	Approve a one-year renewal for \$89,000 with a requirement to expand the scope and length of future Know-Your-Rights workshops.

Bunker Hill Community College

Program Summary	BHCC developed and implemented a specially-designed contextualized multiple-level ESOL program focused on customer service for students at Student Performance Levels (SPL) 4-6, including wraparound services, and career support. The program aimed to enroll at least 100 Somerville participants.
Current Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHCC signed up 133 Somerville residents, 125 of whom stayed with the program. • 71% of students made measurable progress with English Language skills and/or adult basic/secondary education levels. • 16 students earned eligibility for the Customer Service Class, while 7 enrolled. <p>BHCC has completed all contract requirements. The contract period ended on 7/1/2021.</p>
Challenges	BHCC transitioned from a planned in-person instruction model to a Covid remote model.

Recommendation	Approve a one-year renewal for \$250,000 to continue the Contextualized Education for English Language & Adult Learners programming.
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Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE)

Program Summary	SCALE offered three remote career readiness and digital literacy programs to serve SCALE’s enrolled English language learner and adult basic education students: Cisco Networking, Cisco Cybersecurity, & Health IT. The goal was to serve 60 students.
Current Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 students have signed up for classes to date • 16 students have completed training programs, while additional students are set to finish programs and certification exams during the summer. <p>SCALE continues to make progress toward meeting the contract goals during the summer of 2021. The MOU expires on 12/31/2021.</p>
Challenges	COVID delayed online intake and recruitment and complicated engaging students with low literacy and computer skills. In addition, DESE requirements regarding instruction, curriculum, training, assessment guidelines for adult learners were launched in late August of 2020, which impacted program design, enrollment policies and systems and ultimately, delayed the start of the program year.
Recommendation	Delay a decision on a one-year renewal for \$118,933 until a future JCRT meeting, which will allow staff to evaluate the program closer to its conclusion.

Asian American Civic Association (ACAA)

Program Summary	ACAA provided job training & placement services in three career tracks: Building Energy Efficient Maintenance Skills (BEEMS), Careers in Banking and Finance (CFB), and Green Automotive Maintenance Skills (GAMS). The contract goal was to train 15 Somerville residents.
Current Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 students have participated thus far <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 in CBF, 3 in GAMS, 4 in BEEMS <p>ACAA continues to make progress toward meeting the contract goals. The contract expires on 10/15/2021.</p>
Challenges	ACAA faced substantial COVID-related challenges during the past year. Two of their training venues, including Somerville High School, have been closed for the past year. This required ACAA to take aggressive steps by renovating its office campus in Chinatown to accommodate

	virtual training. Staff turnover further complicated some training programs. COVID social distancing requirements also delayed student licensing and certification tests.
Recommendation	Delay a decision on a one-year renewal for \$200,000 until a future JCRT meeting, which will allow staff to evaluate the program closer to its conclusion.

Just-A-Start

Program Summary	Just-A-Start implemented Somerville Career Connect, intensive, full-time, 8-month long industry-specific training programs in Biomedical & IT Careers. The program includes career exploration programs, soft-skills training, and bi-weekly stipends. The goal was to train 5 Somerville residents.
Current Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Somerville residents are participating in the program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 residents are enrolled in the Biomedical Career program ○ 4 residents are enrolled in the IT Career program <p>Just-A-Start continues to make progress toward meeting the contract goals. The program will conclude in October. The contract expires on 11/30/2021.</p>
Challenges	None. Just-A-Start was able to find a creative solution (gift cards) to ensure that all program participants receive the bi-weekly stipend and avoid triggering the benefits “cliff effect.”
Recommendation	Delay a decision on a one-year renewal for \$113,523 until a future JCRT meeting, which allow staff to evaluate the program closer to its conclusion.

Per Scholas

Program Summary	Per Scholas’ training prepares motivated individuals for a range of entry-and mid-level careers in the IT industry, including Cloud Practitioners, Software Engineers, Java Developers, Network Administrators, Network Field Engineers, and Network Support Specialists. The contract goal was to train 15 Somerville residents.
Current Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Somerville residents have enrolled thus far. • 5 Somerville residents have enrolled in the training class that starts in the July • Recruitment is underway to fill slots with Somerville residents for the training class that starts in August. <p>Per Scholas continues to make progress toward meeting the contract goals. They requested and have been granted a no-cost contract extension to January 31, 2022. The contract was originally set to expire on 10/31/2021.</p>

Challenges	<p>Per Scholas faced the challenges of raising brand awareness in Somerville and recruiting virtually during COVID. These factors slowed the pace of enrollment of Somerville residents.</p> <p>City staff have begun working with Per Scholas to make introductions to Somerville community organizations in an effort to expand outreach and identify potential Somerville students.</p>
Recommendation	<p>Delay a decision on a one-year renewal for \$66,706 until a future JCRT meeting, which allow staff to evaluate the program closer to its conclusion.</p>