

FEDERAL GRANT

Trahan, CTI celebrate \$1.5M for YouthBuild



U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan visited Community Teamwork's YouthBuild program in Lowell Oct. 1, 2024 to present a \$1.5 million check from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Workforce Investment's Division of Youth Services. The funds will support the general operations of YouthBuild's construction and culinary programs. PETER CURRIER — LOWELL SUN

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LOWELL >> U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan visited Community Teamwork Inc's. YouthBuild Tuesday to celebrate the awarding of \$1.5 million in federal funds to support the organization's pre-apprenticeship program for young adults.

The money comes from the Department of Labor's Office of Workforce Investment's Division of Youth Services, and will support the general funding for YouthBuild and its

mission of helping at-risk young adults in Lowell by developing skills that can be used in a career.

“Some of you built homes for Habitat for Humanity, and affordable housing is a crisis not just in the state but the entire country. You have already connected the building part, the fact that we need more stuff and it needs to be accessible to more people, and affordable,” said Trahan, referring to YouthBuild’s construction program.

The construction program is offered alongside a culinary program, which allows the young adults to earn certifications and gain practical culinary experience while also partnering with local organizations to provide food to homeless people and those who are food insecure.

Community Teamwork Director of Youth Homeless Services Nicholas DiGiammo said the funding is “vital” for the continuation of their programs.

“It pays for a lot of the materials we use, cost of the site, staffing, and it helps us grow the team,” said DiGiammo. “It helps us serve more communities and more young people.”

YouthBuild was established at Community Teamwork in 1999, creating a focus on young adults who dropped out of school and need a second chance to prepare to enter the workforce.

Community Teamwork Chief Program Officer and incoming CEO Carl Howell said in a statement after Trahan’s visit Tuesday that the funding will benefit more than 120 young adults as they seek their diplomas and career certifications.

“Through tens of thousands of hours of service, these young people are actively improving the neighborhoods they call home. Their transformation is a powerful example of how investing in youth strengthens the future of our community,” said Howell.

Current CEO Karen Frederick, who is stepping down from the role Nov. 1, said in a statement that the organization is “thrilled to receive this recent funding.” “This funding will allow us to serve at-risk, low-income unemployed youth in our community, who have been unsuccessful in traditional educational settings, by helping them to earn their HiSet and learn occupational skillsets which will improve their chances of becoming gainfully employed,” said Frederick. “It is a program which includes working with many partners in our community, and highlights the very best of public-private partnerships.”

From YouthBuild, 168 students have passed their HiSET tests and completed more than 150 construction and culinary certifications in the last two years. During that period, the students completed more than 26,000 hours in community service, cooked more than 23,000 meals for community member, and built a number of structures for the community like softball dugouts in local parks and Habitat for Humanity homes.

“For the past 25 years, Community Teamwork’s YouthBuild program has helped at-risk young adults in Lowell and across the region develop the skills, certifications, and experience necessary to start good-paying careers,” Trahan said in a statement after the visit. “This significant federal award is a testament to the success of YouthBuild Lowell and its team of instructors, but what’s most impressive to me is their focus on experience through service. Each year, YouthBuild students dedicate thousands of hours to community service projects that allow them to hone the skills they’ve learned while giving back to our community. That’s the kind of initiative that we should be investing in — one that’s good for our young people, our community, and our economy.”