Workforce training program for homeless wins grant

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The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts has provided $71,000 in seed funding to a 15-month-old program helping the homeless find employment.

Ready, Willing and Able–Worcester (RWA) is a workforce development program of the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) and is designed to help the homeless and formerly homeless learn or rebuild skills to sustain long-term employment, establish a credible work history to enhance future job opportunities and better support self-sufficiency.

RWA said more than 130 people were referred to the organization in its first 15 months with nearly 100 obtaining employment for three to six months and 65 placed into permanent employment. Those who participated received pre-employment skills training and health insurance. The clients were hired to provide maintenance work for employers such as Cutler Management Corp., Enterprise Cleaning, Manpower/Saint-Gobain, and Security Fence.

Positions are part- and full-time, and companies receive a tax credit for every full-time worker they employ through the program.

Employers interested in learning more about RWA should contact Robert Thomas at 508-756-6330.