

CENTER FOR AFRICAN HERITAGE  
River Point Summer Youth Employment Update and  
'Pathways Out of Poverty' Proposal  
Submitted to the Town of Falmouth  
Town Council Meeting  
August 24, 2009

**Fact Sheet**

**River Point Project Update:** After 8 accident-free weeks, the 10 youth trainees in the Center for African Heritage's summer training in organic farming have cleared and painted the River Point barn, drained standing water from and cleared debris from the basement of the site's house, cleared all standing trash and debris from grounds around the house and barn, identified and cleared invasive flora under the supervision of Falmouth's Open Space Ombudsman Bob Shafto, and learned to cultivate selected organically raised livestock, including to date goats, rabbits and ducks. Trainees also have received formal training in: safe use of tractors and other heavy farm equipment, use of roto tillers, use of hand tools, basic carpentry, raised bed construction, water conservation, water and soil testing and livestock immunization. They also receive daily classroom training in English as a second language, composition, interviewing for employment and resume writing and personal financial management. The final details of how the state would administer federal stimulus funding delayed program startup by two weeks. Unseasonable rains, the condition of the footbridge linking River Point with the Grey Road shopping center, and poor soil quality due to high clay content further delayed planned land clearance and cultivation. To date trainees have tested and cleared approximately three arable acres of the four acres originally planned. Planting has been restricted to four raised beds that the trainees built from discarded pallets, with two more under construction. Cleared acreage, however, is considered productive for planting next season and is ready for winter preparation. Next month trainees will receive briefings from 10 to 15 select employers on what they are looking for in an ideal employee. These employers have been chosen based on their willingness to provide graduates with at least part-time continuing employment, a primary program goal.

**'Pathways Out of Poverty' Background:** The U. S. Department of Labor has provided \$150 million in recovery funds for "training and placement services that provide pathways out of poverty and into employment" (Funding Opportunity Number **SGA-DFA-PY-08-19**). Individual grants will range from \$2 million to \$8 million for two-year projects. The Center for African Heritage will pursue this funding and proposes to include the Town of Falmouth and Hannaford Bros. as partners. Specifically, the Center for African Heritage will request that \$200,000 of its final budget go to permanently repair the footbridge linking River Point with the Grey Road shopping center so that the River Point site may always be accessible to the Town as a nature sanctuary and public open space. Further, so that River Point may continue over the grant period as an organic farming training site for youth trainees, trainees who are veterans and retraining trainees who have been displaced from previous employment. Application deadline: Sept. 29, 2009.