

IF YOU . . .

- **are not going to school and do not have plans to return...**

CREATE AN ACTION PLAN:

- Visit the Franklin Hampshire Career Center for information on apprenticeships, jobs, volunteer opportunities, and how to write a resume. (www.fhyouth.org).
- Many people might ask you, "What are you going to do?" Have you thought about that? Think realistically about your response to these and other questions.
- Talk to a parent or guardian, former teacher, friend, or someone who you trust, about creating a plan for ways to stay involved with your community.
- Get help with developing a career plan that looks at your dreams, goals, personal preferences, interests and needs. In Hampshire County, the YWCA serves youth in the surrounding Northampton area. In Franklin County, contact FCAC Youth programs. See the "Learning More" section of this brochure.
- Take a sample GED practice test to see how you place. You may be ready to take the actual test.
- Talk about your interests with friends who you trust. Tell every person you meet that you're looking for a job. Ask them for job leads or suggestions.
- Learn by doing – consider volunteering to gain work experience. Habitat for Humanity and other local organizations always need volunteers. Check local newspaper listings for groups seeking volunteers.
- Get involved with community groups or churches that serve youth.

IF YOU PLAN TO PURSUE A GED

Legally in Massachusetts, you must

- be 16 years-old to withdraw from school, and
- obtain a letter of formal withdrawal from the school you last attended.

words of caution:

- Special education students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) should not officially withdraw from school before seeking legal assistance. IEPs are legal documents guaranteeing your right to "Free and Appropriate Public Education" (FAPE) services until you graduate or turn 22 years-old. Some of the services you may receive include: free evaluations to determine impact of disability, person-centered plans, untimed exams, special tutoring, substituting one required course for another, modifying or waiving foreign language requirements, etc. Contact the Federation for Children with Special Needs at (800) 331-0688 for more information.
- If you are under 21 years-old and you haven't taken the GED test you have the right to return to high school.

You can do it!



IF YOU DROP OUT OF SCHOOL KEEP LEARNING!

Franklin Hampshire Regional
Employment Board and Youth Council
One Arch Place, Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 773-1835
www.fhyouth.org

The Franklin Hampshire Career Center
One Arch Place | 243 King Street
Greenfield, MA 01301 | Northampton, MA 01060
(413) 774-4361 | (413) 586-6506
www.fhyouth.org | www.fhyouth.org

FCAC Youth Programs

154 Federal Street, Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 774-7028
www.fcac.net

YWCA of Western Massachusetts

6 Myrtle Street, Northampton, MA 01060
(413) 586-6807
www.ywworks.org

Community Coalition for Teens

278 Main Street, suite 411, Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 774-1194

Young Entrepreneurs Society

26 South Main Street, Orange, MA 01364
(978) 544-1869
www.yes-inc.org

Dial/Self Teen Services

196 Federal Street, Greenfield, MA 01301
(800) 878-0698
(413) 774-7054
www.dialself.org

This brochure was produced by the Franklin Hampshire Career Center with the cooperation of many organizations in the area. Brochure conceived and edited by Ken Johnston.

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HIGH SCHOOL NOT FOR YOU?



THINK CAREFULLY . . .

Leaving SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATING can be a LIFE-CHANGING DECISION

Leaving school before graduating can lead to an upward or downward spiral in your life. If you're wrestling with this kind of important decision, there is help for you in Franklin and Hampshire Counties.

Whatever situation you may be in, planning and setting goals is the key to becoming a self-directed and mature person. Without question, finishing high school will offer you the greatest opportunity to compete in today's tight job market. But if you decide to leave school, this choice is the beginning – not the end! Many people have left high school without a degree and have gone on to have successful careers.

On the other hand, if you're not sure what matters the most and don't have realistic goals, leaving school can be the beginning of a depressing route to boredom, poverty, and feelings of being trapped in entry-level jobs. Years may pass by before you find the special opportunity that finally opens up your life.

Think carefully before you make a decision about leaving school. For information and help on who to contact see the "Learning More" section of this brochure.

IF YOU . . .

- **are OUT OF SCHOOL**
- **WANT TO FINISH SCHOOL, OR**
- **WANT TO CONTINUE LEARNING...**

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS:

- Talk to a parent or guardian, former teacher, friend, or someone you trust about alternative learning programs in your area.
- Speak to your school's guidance counselor to get help with making up missed work, tutoring, placement in special programs, and/or transfer to another school.
- Research GED programs in your area. Visit each to see which one is a good fit. Ask for sample practice tests.
- Call Greenfield Community College at (413) 775-1000 or Holyoke Community College at (413) 538-7000 to learn more about classes that interest you.

Choosing to stop going to high school does not mean you have to stop academic learning.

*Did you know that anyone
can sign up for a class at a
local community college? This
includes acting, art, dance,
music . . .*

**"It takes courage to grow up and
turn out to be who you really are"**
– e.e. cummings

LEARNING MORE

For information and referral services on how to get help before leaving school, contact any of the following agencies:

GED SERVICES

GED services are provided by several different organizations in Franklin and Hampshire counties. Most classes are free and on-going throughout the year. For information on the nearest GED service provider or learning center, contact one of the organizations listed below.

FRANKLIN COUNTY (Greenfield / North Quabbin area)

The Charboneau Learning Center, (413) 774-3935
Even Start, (413) 773-9309 (Greenfield)
Even Start, (978) 544-6235 (Orange)
Franklin Hampshire Career Center, (413) 774-4361
North Quabbin Adult Education Center, (978) 544-8917

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY (Amherst / Northampton / Easthampton areas)

Amherst Adult Learning Center, (413) 259-1663
Even Start, (413) 584-9599 (Northampton)
Franklin Hampshire Career Center, (413) 586-6506
Holyoke Community College,* (413) 552-2292
Pioneer Valley Adult Education Center, (413) 584-6755
Reunion Center, (413) 586-4900 ext. 359
Ware Adult Education Center, (413) 967-9902

YOUTH SERVICES

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Dial/Self, (413) 774-7054
FCAC Youth Programs, (413) 774-7028
GLASS, (413) 774-7028
Greenfield Community Youth Center, (413) 775-0144
Brickhouse Teen Center, (413) 863-9559
Seeds of Solidarity, (978) 544-9023
YES, (978) 544-1869
YMCA - Athol, (978) 249-3305

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

Big Brothers Big Sisters, (413) 253-2591
Flywheel, (413) 527-9800
Girl Scouts, (800) 462-9100
Northampton Recreation Department, (413) 587-1040
North Star, Self-directed Learning for Teens, (413) 582-0193

* Contact Holyoke Community College regarding fees.

Hampshire County youth services, continued

YMCA, (413) 584-7086
Youth Action Coalition, (413) 253-2158
Youth Leadership in the Arts, (413) 584-3880 ext. 303
Young Men of Color Leadership Group, (413) 253-9887
YWCA of Western Mass., (413) 586-6807

YOUNG PARENTS

If you're pregnant, Massachusetts law permits you to remain in school and participate in all activities as long as you are physically capable. If your doctor recommends bed rest due to health concerns, you may request a free home tutor while out of school. You do not have to quit school due to your pregnancy. When you are ready to return to school after giving birth, contact your school counselor and tell them that you are ready to return to class. School counselors can be important advocates.

If you decide to pursue a GED, and you are 16 or older, Even Start and the YWCA offer free family and parenting support. In Franklin County, Even Start provides quality on-site child care and adult education programs for parents with children under the age of five. Healthy Families offers a free home visiting program for first time parents under the age of 21, in both counties. Its focus is on parent/child interaction, and it assists young parents with accessing community resources.

For information on pregnancy testing or counseling, contact one of the organizations listed below.

PREGNANCY TESTING & COUNSELING

Franklin County

Healthy Families, (413) 376-1127
or (978) 544-5423 ext. 127
Tapestry Health, (413) 773-5403

Hampshire County

Tapestry Health, (413) 586-2539 (Northampton)
Tapestry Health, (413) 548-9992 (Amherst)
Healthy Families, (413) 584-5690 (Northampton)