

# Preparing Youth for Careers, Lifelong Learning, and Civic Participation

*Principles and Characteristics of Six Leading  
United States Youth Development Programs*



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AMERICAN YOUTH POLICY FORUM  
“*Bridging Youth Policy, Practice, and Research*”  
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**A**t the international Youth Employment Summit, September 7–11, 2002, representatives from 140 countries gathered in Alexandria, Egypt to share knowledge and experience and to advance the cause of better preparation of youth for entry into, and success in, their respective national economies.

At the Summit, for the benefit of those with little familiarity with the American experience, Glenda Partee, Ph.D., then president and co-director of the American Youth Policy Forum, presented an overview of leading U.S. youth development and employment preparation programs. The American Youth Policy Forum is pleased to reprint Dr. Partee's remarks and to suggest updated resources for further study. The complete text of this paper may also be found at [www.aypf.org/publications](http://www.aypf.org/publications).

This new report reflects material contained in the American Youth Policy Forum's 2006 study by Nancy Martin and Samuel Halperin, *Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth*, particularly Chapters 13-18. See [www.aypf.org/publications](http://www.aypf.org/publications).

Betsy Brand, Director

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## Overview

This overview paper is designed for practitioners in both the public and non-governmental sectors who design and implement youth employment and youth development programs, the policymakers who support them, and others who wish to:

- learn more about principles and characteristics of leading youth development programs now operating in the United States; and
- identify components or entire programs which may be transferable or applicable to non-American societies and additional communities in the United States.

Each of the referenced program models has documented evidence of effectiveness in contributing to positive youth outcomes, including increased levels of employment, higher earnings, high school completion (or its credentialed equivalent), postsecondary attendance, and reduced rates of reliance on public welfare assistance or involvement in criminal activities. Each of these models has been broadly adapted in the United States. For more information on the specific program evaluations on which these outcomes are based, see the evaluation summaries in the American Youth Policy Forum's *Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth* (2006); *Some Things DO Make a Difference for Youth: A Compendium of Evaluations of Youth Programs and Practices* (1997), and *MORE Things that DO Make a Difference for Youth* (1999).

A few caveats about American youth employment and youth development programs are in order:

1. The two primary avenues for career preparation for young people are through formal secondary and postsecondary education and employer-supported on-the-job training, neither of which is the focus of this paper.
2. Federal government support for youth employment preparation has primarily been targeted historically to economically disadvantaged youth and those with significant challenges to successful employment (e.g., school dropouts with low-basic skills, youth with disabilities,

young parents), not to youth in general. Many youth employment programs that have been supported and replicated by the U.S. federal government originally developed from privately-supported or local community efforts. That continues to be true today.

## Background of this Report

In the early 1990s, the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) set out to identify youth development and employment preparation programs with documented evidence of effectiveness in youth programming, as determined by independent evaluators. Our efforts were motivated by the desire to test the then prevailing assumption among many policymakers that—

*National policy and investment in youth employment training, primarily for economically disadvantaged youth with multiple challenges to successful employment,<sup>[1]</sup> had not been successful.<sup>[2]</sup> Why invest in efforts to improve youth employment?<sup>[3]</sup> There was a pervading sense that “nothing works.” Therefore, why bother?*

We at AYPF had visited a number of programs with documented records of success with young people, particularly low-income youth, and therefore we set about collecting evaluations of a broad range of youth programs, including those focused on employment outcomes and reduction of negative behaviors.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Principles of Effective Youth Development and Employment Programs

From over 100 programs included in our compendia of evaluations of effective and promising youth programs, we derived and highlighted a number of common principles:

- **Implementation quality**—factors contributing to successful implementation include ample start-up time; clear agreement and communication of goals and purposes; sufficient, timely and sustained resources; strong leadership from the federal, state or local levels; effective professional staff development; and use of quality data as tools to improve performance.
- **Caring, knowledgeable adults**—teachers, counselors, mentors, case workers, coaches, community members, program directors or other well-trained individuals who understand and care deeply about youth. Such adults provide young people with significant time and attention and demonstrate that they are genuinely committed to the success of youth “for the long haul.” They must be knowledgeable and, therefore, should receive extensive training in working effectively and compassionately with young people and in providing age-appropriate activities that adhere to sound youth development principles.
- **High standards and expectations**—successful programs do not water down their standards, but maintain high standards of performance for young people and offer appropriate supports so that they can meet these standards.
- **Importance of community**—effective programs find ways to integrate and use community members (parents/guardians/employers) as resources to support planning, and to extend and enrich curricula, provide additional cadres of caring adults, and function as a natural base of advocacy for the young people and their program.
- **A holistic approach**—effective programs include a broad set of strategies and services to address varying needs of young people

(e.g., extended hours, individualized attention, hands-on experiential instruction, culturally-sensitive enrichment activities, child care and transportation, life skills including assertiveness training, appropriate recognition/rewards, and a strong focus on developing peer support).

- **Youth as resources/community service and service-learning**—opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities in positive ways, while also using community work as context for helping youth develop and apply critical skills that are important in the workplace and in life generally.
- **Work-based learning**—adding “authenticity” and “relevance” to the learning experience and ensuring that skills learned are likely to lead to employment in good careers.
- **Long-term services/support and follow-up**—of six months to several years, providing opportunities for young people to continue relationships with caring and knowledgeable adults who help to bridge the critical early months of employment after program graduation.

Although every effective program did not reflect all of these principles, invariably the best programs were those that incorporated *all* or most of these principles, not just a few.

The balance of this paper provides a brief overview of six leading youth development and employment models, describing the youth population served, basic components, outcome data, and funding sources. There is great commonality across the leading youth development and employment programs reviewed.

- Each provides a broad set of strategies and services to address the needs of the target youth population, though each takes a slightly different approach in the strategies used.
- All offer some form of on-site social services programs (case management, young parenting, counseling, crisis intervention, information and referrals) and, in some cases, gender-specific individual and group activities.
- Each tries to inculcate work appreciation values and incorporates work readiness skills and authentic work-based experiences.
- Though they sprout from different sources (e.g., through federal legislation or as community-based initiatives), they have very different histories, operate at different funding levels, and have varying philoso-



phies. Each creates a particular structure and environment to build participant confidence, skills and values as a productive individual and participating citizen.

- Finally, each has a particular organizational structure in place for managing, replicating, and guaranteeing adherence to the goals, objectives and standards of the program.

Today's **Youth Service and Conservation Corps** trace their roots back to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) operated by the U.S. Army in the 1930s. The CCC was one of the most successful public work efforts in U.S. history and provided alternative employment for 500,000 unemployed young men derailed by the U.S. economic depression. They worked in forests, parks and rangelands and contributed greatly to the environmental and recreational health of the country.<sup>[5]</sup> (The U.S. Army operated this male-only and, at the time, racially segregated project. With the advent of World War II, the CCC was disbanded as young men were mobilized for war.)

In contrast to the CCC's origins, **YouthBuild** began in 1978, when a group of New York City teenagers expressed their desire to renovate abandoned buildings for homeless and low-income people and, thus, to revitalize their community. Whereas YouthBuild has community-based origins and seeks to prepare young people for entry-level employment and civic participation in urban areas, the **Job Corps** and the **National Guard Youth Challenge Program** seek to take youth out of their often dysfunctional communities into residential settings away from their home neighborhoods.

**Job Corps** is an open-entry/open-exit youth development program (students may enroll at any time and exit when they complete their learning goals) and is self-paced, designed to help young people develop academic and occupational skills before placement in jobs. **YouthBuild**, on the other hand, expects young people to enter as a cohort and runs programs on an average 12-month cycle.

**Jobs for America's Graduates** offers a highly structured, uniform, and modular curriculum intended to prepare young people for success on the initial rungs of the workforce ladder. Well established as a dropout prevention program, it has recently added dropout recovery to its mission.

**Opportunities Industrialization Centers** operates in predominantly minority communities, offering academic preparation, essential support services, and career-specific occupational training.

Among **YouthBuild's** special features is providing youth an immediate and visible role in rebuilding their communities and helping to develop a

value system strong enough to compete with the often dysfunctional culture of the streets. Leadership development is woven into every aspect of **YouthBuild**. Through workshops and weekend retreats, trainees learn decision-making, group facilitation, public speaking, and negotiating skills and are given opportunities to fine-tune these skills as they design and participate in community improvement projects. Participants also learn to advocate for issues that concern them and their communities. **YouthBuild** trainees testify before Congress and in their state legislative houses. They take an active role speaking out on a wide range of social issues. They also share in the governance of their own program and participate actively in community affairs, learning the values and the life-long commitment needed by effective and ethical community leaders.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Trends in U.S. Youth Employment Policy and Practice

As these six leading programs have spread across the nation, more attention and resources have been devoted to issues of transitioning vulnerable youth to employment and postsecondary educational opportunities. Program models alone cannot create a strong system to reconnect youth to mainstream society. Two key trends over the past decade capitalize on the lessons learned from these programs and connect their successes to the broader movement of creating a *youth development system* in the United States.

The first trend is the quality movement in youth employment programs, exemplified by the **Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet)** developed by the National Youth Employment Coalition. The second is the proliferation of intermediaries, interdisciplinary work groups that connect programs and policies across the separate silos of education, workforce development, human services, juvenile justice, and the like.

In the early 1990s, the U.S. government was quite critical of existing youth employment programs and the workforce system that sustained such mediocre efforts. In response, to identify effective programs and practices along with significant research that link these practices to positive outcomes, a distinguished group of practitioners, policymakers, researchers, employers, and others gathered to distill the collective knowledge of the field into a template for what works for vulnerable youth. The result was the Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet). The hope was that by nurturing a quality movement, effective practices would spread and research-proven strategies would take root in more programs—reconnecting more youth across the country to continuing education and living-wage jobs.

Since 1996, over 250 applicants nationwide have completed a PEPNet application and undergone the rigorous PEPNet peer review process by panels representative of youth employment practitioners, researchers and policymakers. Of the applicants, only 69 have been recognized as PEPNet Awardees. PEPNet awardees must document effective strategies in five categories of criteria: (1) organizational purpose and activities; (2) infrastructure and management; (3) youth development; (4) workforce development; and (5) tangible evidence of success. These criteria include subcategories for a total of 22 criteria covering ways that programs for youth are organized

and managed, how they use information for continuous improvement, the strategies used to engage youth and link them with caring and knowledgeable adults and peers, and the way that work experiences are used for motivation, tools for learning, and to develop employability skills. (For more information about PEPNet, see <http://www.nyec.org/pepnet/index.html>.)

State and local areas in the U.S. are now applying the PEPNet criteria on a system-wide level, rather than only individual programs. By taking the PEPNet self-assessment, local workforce investment boards are able to look across programs and funding silos to ensure that young people in their community are able to access quality youth and workforce development services. In addition, the National Youth Employment Coalition and the U.S. Agency for International Development are investigating the efficacy of youth employment programs in other countries using the PEPNet criteria as a tool for self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

Hand in hand with the quality movement has been the rise of *local intermediary organizations* to coordinate services, blend funding, and unify a vision for reconnecting youth. Practitioners and policymakers agree that career development alone does not prepare a young person to be self-sufficient. Rather, comprehensive planning is needed to coordinate housing, transportation, healthcare, child care, education, and other supports for vulnerable youth. Local intermediaries have emerged as a valuable mechanism to bring partners, resources, interests and policies together.

The federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 created the most common example of local intermediaries: Youth Councils. As subcommittees of the local Workforce Investment Board, Youth Councils have taken giant steps to:

- engage, convene, and support critical constituencies;
- promote quality standards and accountability;
- broker and leverage resources; and
- promote effective policies.<sup>17</sup>

Membership in most local areas is broad and can include representatives from housing, foster care system, juvenile justice, community-based organizations, parents of eligible youth, the youth themselves, and others.

As this brief overview shows, American policies and practices for reconnecting vulnerable youth to further education and preparation for living wage employment are diverse, decentralized, and very much in dynamic flux. A great deal of creativity in the governmental, nonprofit, and private sectors has produced some leading models of documented success in helping vulnerable youth reconnect to the American mainstream. As yet, however, there is no American youth development *system* with policies and resources commensurate with the need. Still, the American Youth Policy Forum believes that there is now available a great deal of knowledge and wisdom that can be of use to other nations concerned with developing the full potential of their youth. The bibliographical references and Internet websites cited below can open doors for everyone to this experience and knowledge.



## Program Summaries

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### Job Corps

Established in 1964, Job Corps is the nation's largest residential and educational workforce training program for economically disadvantaged youth, ages 16 through 24. This voluntary program serves nearly 60,000 young Americans every year and has trained and educated two million young people over its 40+ year history.

Located in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, Job Corps' 122 facilities are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Job Corps also manages outreach, admissions, and career transition operations at hundreds of locations around the country.

Job Corps is funded by Congress and administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. Private sector companies that have been awarded contracts through a competitive bid process handle most center operations, outreach, admissions, and job placement at 94 Job Corps centers. The U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior operate another 28 centers, known as Civilian Conservation Centers. Private sector employer partners and National Training Contractors often make significant contributions of equipment, curriculum, and instructors to enhance the quality of Job Corps training.

Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor establish performance measures for Job Corps centers and Job Corps operators to evaluate center performance through their achievements. This performance measurement system makes centers accountable; centers that do not perform must change management to achieve the results expected by Job Corps.

The Job Corps enacted Fiscal Year 2006 appropriation was \$1,557,270,000. Though appropriated funds for most employment and training have been consistently cut by Congress in recent years, Job Corps is one of few programs continuing to enjoy Congressional support and funding increases.

Income level determines Job Corps eligibility. Only low-income youth who lack the skills necessary to find a job are eligible for admission to Job Corps. Most students learn about Job Corps from a friend or family member, through school, a potential employer, faith-based or community organization, One-Stop Career Center, or employment services worker. To be admitted to this voluntary program, Job Corps candidates must be free of behavioral and

drug problems and must agree to abide by Job Corps' Zero Tolerance policy for drugs, alcohol, and violence.

Interested young people apply to join the program through an admissions counselor. Eligible youth are assigned to a specific Job Corps center, usually one that is located nearest the young person's home and offers vocational training of interest. While living at the center, students participate in academic and work-based learning, as well as employability skills training. After students leave the program, Job Corps provides placement assistance for jobs, higher education, and the military. There is also a follow-up period during which staff supports graduates in finding and retaining employment.

### ***Job Corps Curricula***

As part of their Job Corps training, students learn vocational trades through a variety of methods, from hands-on instruction to job shadowing to work placements. Nationally, vocational training represents more than 100 occupations in a range of industries, including automotive, IT, construction, and health care. This training also allows students to learn the employability skills that employers say are the key to success in the workplace. Additionally, Job Corps provides academic training, including High School Diploma (HSD) and General Educational Development (GED) programs.

Seventy-four percent of Job Corps enrollees are high school dropouts. Most have never held a full-time job. 33 percent come from families on public assistance. The typical Job Corps student reads on slightly less than an 8th grade level. However, because of successful partnerships, small classes, and dedicated teachers, most Job Corps students dramatically improve their math and reading skills over a typical 9-month stay.

Because Job Corps is a self-paced program, lengths of stay vary. Students may remain enrolled for up to two years, but the average length of stay for graduates is nine months. An optional additional year is granted for students who qualify for advanced training or college classes.

Job Corps provides career transition services for 12 months to ensure a graduate has the mentors and support services needed to succeed in the workplace. Through regular follow-up, staff assist graduates with transitional needs such as housing location services, transportation, childcare, and financial planning.

Job Corps works with national and local employers to provide the entry-level employees they need. Employers help students prepare for careers through involvement in areas ranging from curriculum design to mock interviews to internships. They also assist in students' career transitions from Job Corps to the workforce through mentoring and support services.



## Evaluation

Over its 41-year history, Job Corps has earned a reputation as the nation's premier workforce training program for young adults. In the program year ending June 2005, 90% of all Job Corps graduates got jobs, enlisted in the military, or enrolled in higher education. Job Corps has succeeded in meeting those needs by consistently being responsive to both employers' demands and the nation's workforce needs. As a testament to these successes, numerous bipartisan political initiatives have supported Job Corps' expansion to serve more disadvantaged young Americans with each passing year.

Every Job Corps student receives vocational and academic training, counseling, housing, and health benefits. When compared to other residential and education programs and institutions, including colleges and universities, Job Corps is at the low end of the cost scale. For example, the U.S. Department of Education's 2002 Digest of Education Statistics reported that the average daily cost per student was \$145 at private four-year postsecondary institutions, \$105 at public postsecondary institutions, and only \$87 at a Job Corps center.

Job Corps' results are evaluated on an ongoing basis through a highly sophisticated and thorough system of performance measurement. Centers and support contracts that do not achieve desired results are placed under new management.

According to the Bush Administration's FY 2007 Budget:

- 87% of graduates will enter employment or enroll in postsecondary education, the military, or advanced training/occupational skills training in the first quarter after exit from the program.
- 65% of students will attain a GED, high school diploma, or certificate by the end of the third quarter after exit.
- 49% of students will achieve literacy or numeracy gains of one adult basic education level (two grade levels).

Additional results achieved by this cost-effective program include:

- During a typical stay in the Job Corps program (approximately eight months), students improve their math by 2.4 grade levels, and their reading by 2.6 grade levels.
- Each participant in the Job Corps program uses \$2,186 less in taxpayer-supported services and programs than comparable non-enrolled individuals.

- A Decision Information Resources, Inc. study found that, on average, each dollar spent by a Job Corps center results in \$1.91 in economic activity in its local community, and for every employee at a Job Corps center, another two-thirds of a full-time employee is created in the local community.
- According to the White House's ExpectMore.Gov website, Job Corps' performance results are positive, and the program compares favorably to other federal training programs for youth.
- The assessment also cites findings that most participants fared better than comparable non-participants in terms of employment and earnings increases, improvements in literacy and numeracy, and reduced involvement in crime.
- According to such findings, the program's benefits exceed its cost to society and graduates gain important vocational skills and attain educational levels higher than those who do not attend the program.

*National Accountability/Performance Measurement System*—As a national program with rigorous performance and accountability standards, Job Corps answers to the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Labor's Inspector General, and the Government Accountability Office. Under the Workforce Investment Act, Job Corps centers are evaluated through outcome criteria such as the number of students who obtain employment and graduates' average starting wages. Again, centers that do not meet standards of excellence are placed under new management.

- *Intensive Residential Training*—Job Corps' rigorous around-the-clock program of individualized attention, discipline, and support in a residential setting produces results. Students who have not succeeded in traditional academic settings benefit from Job Corps' small class sizes and hands-on, self-paced approach. The program strictly enforces a zero tolerance policy for drugs, alcohol, and violence, offering students from disruptive environments a safe place to learn and succeed.
- *Employer Involvement and Employability Skills*—Job Corps partners with employers locally and nationally to infuse business sense into program operations, upgrade vocational training, improve teaching techniques, and secure work opportunities for students before and after graduation. Guided by employer input, Job Corps teaches specific employability skills, which are reinforced through classroom

simulations, employer mentoring and presentations, and participation in extracurricular activities, clubs, and student government-sponsored programs.

**For more information about Job Corps:**

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## Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)

“JAG,” as it is popularly called, was founded in 1980 in Delaware after a group of that state’s leaders, led by then Governor Pete du Pont, identified the need for a comprehensive state-level effort to keep at-risk youth in school and prepared for employment. JAG has long enjoyed the strong support of public officials and corporate executives. For example, its first board of directors included Governor du Pont, Vice President George H.W. Bush, former Vice President Walter Mondale, and five governors. Leading corporations continue to fund JAG’s programs, mentor its students, employ its graduates, provide work-based learning experiences, and serve on local and state JAG boards of directors (or advisory groups) to monitor program relevance and quality.

Today, after a quarter century of testing and upgrading the JAG Model, JAG is widely regarded as one of the most cost-effective statewide solutions for tackling high dropout rates, low academic performance, youth unemployment and “academic, social and workforce issues experienced by young people with significant barriers to success.”

Since 1980, over 500,000 youth have received JAG services. In 2005-06, the JAG Model is delivering comprehensive services to nearly 32,000 participants in 700 high schools, middle schools, adult centers, and community colleges in 820 communities in 29 states.

There are four program applications of the JAG Model:

- The **Multi-Year Program**, providing dropout prevention services for 9th to 12th graders, work-based learning, and 12 months of post-graduation follow-up services (a maximum of 57 months of services);
- The **Senior Program**, providing school-to-career transition services for seniors only consisting of nine months of in-school services and 12 months of post-graduation follow-up services (21 months of in-school and follow-up services);
- The **Middle School Program**, providing academic remediation and personal improvement services for 7th and 8th graders; and,
- The **Dropout Recovery Program**, providing out-of-school youth ages 15 to 21 preparation for a GED or a high school diploma, employability skills, and occupationally specific training through a community college, placement in a quality job leading to career advancement opportunities, and 12 months of post-completion follow-up services (up to 18 months of services).

### **JAG Program Components**

1. Recruitment and Selection
2. GED Preparation (or assistance in completing high school graduation requirements)
3. WorkKeys Assessment
4. Basic Skills Testing (TABE) and Remediation
5. Employability, Personal and Leadership Skills Training
6. Advisement and Support
7. Linkages with the Public Workforce System
8. Professional Association (participant-led chapter activities)
9. Follow-up Services (12 months)
  - Employer Marketing
  - Job Development
  - Placement Services
10. Accountability (Performance Metrics)

**In-school participants** receive activity-based instruction by a JAG Specialist serving 35-45 targeted youth. Classroom learning (individual and group) is delivered using the JAG National Curriculum consisting of 85 competency-based modules. Eight major module categories include: career development, job attainment, job survival, basic academics, leadership and self-development, personal skills, life survival, and workplace competencies. Senior Program participants attain the 37 core competencies of the JAG National Curriculum, and Multi-Year Program participants are expected to attain up to 85 competencies if they receive four years of in-school program services (9th to 12th grade plus the 12 months of follow-up). JAG participants also receive adult mentoring and coaching. Enrollment is based on selection of an advisory group consisting of administrators, counselors, academic instructors, and career and technical instructors.

JAG believes its Dropout Recovery Program Application is most effective when JAG-Local Affiliates meet two criteria. First, they must partner and co-locate with a community college; and second, they must screen recruits and

enroll semester cohorts based on student motivation and readiness. In 2006, JAG introduced a customized online curriculum for its 60 out-of-school programs consisting of 20 competency-based e-learning modules.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Statistics and Research Center surveyed employers of JAG graduates using funding from an earmark grant (2003) provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. Overall, the survey portrayed "a highly successful program...that is valued among JAG employers." A few findings from the survey include:

- 98 percent of employers were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to employ other JAG graduates
- 90 percent were likely to offer full-time positions
- 86 percent said JAG graduates "exceeded" or "greatly exceeded" their expectations
- Only three percent of JAG graduates did not meet supervisors' expectations

JAG benefits from strong research, evaluation, and accountability emphases. Professor Andy Sum, Director of the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University and arguably the nation's leading researcher and advocate in the youth employment arena, is a subcontractor for JAG's Congressional Earmark Grants from the U.S. Department of Labor to deliver research reports based on data from JAG's Electronic National Data Management System (e-NDMS). The Internet-based system provides data and information in three broad categories: participants served, services delivered, and outcomes achieved. JAG Specialists devote 10-15 minutes per day to update the system and are able to run a comprehensive list of reports for self-management or supervisory purposes. The system is also used as a major source of data and information for JAG's annual accreditation process which results in a report highlighting strengths and areas for improvement as well as recommendations from JAG National Reviewers.

### **Funding**

Largely as a result of JAG's dedication to accountability and documenting measurable results and the large Congressional and gubernatorial support amassed over 25 years, JAG has received four Congressional earmark grants since 2001, rising from \$742,000 to \$1,000,000 each. These grants were dedicated to strengthening JAG's infrastructure and support for the further development of best practices, professional upgrading, and a variety of e-learning

tools, handbooks, videos, and new elements of the JAG delivery system.

JAG State Organizations report that the per participant cost for in-school programs ranges from \$1,200 to \$1,800 serving a full student load of 35 to 45 participants in the in-school and follow-up phases with graduates and non-graduates from the prior year.

In serving dropouts, a full-time Program Director (JAG Specialist), one to two part-time GED instructors, and a full-time administrative assistant requires a first-year budget of \$175,000 (reducing to \$150,000 in year two). This budget equates to \$2,500 per participant when serving 70 youth per year (\$2,150 in year two). The public workforce system under the state and federal Workforce Investment Act is the primary source of revenue for the Dropout Recovery Program.

**JAG Program Highlights Total Participants: 31,912**

(based on 2005–06 data)

A total of 700 JAG Model programs serve 820 communities.

Number of Programs Operating in:

	#	%
■ Middle Schools	18	3%
■ High Schools—Multi-Year (9th to 12th graders)	441	63%
■ High Schools—Senior (12th only)	169	24%
■ Out-of-School Youth—Community Colleges are preferred	72	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100%</b>

***Performance Outcomes for the Class of 2005***

The following outcomes were achieved by graduates at the close of the 12-month follow-up phase on May 31, 2006:

■ <b>Graduation Rate</b> Completing a high school diploma or GED	92.3%
■ <b>Positive Outcome Rate</b> Graduates employed full-time, in military service, postsecondary education or other training program	72.5%
■ <b>Job Placement Rate</b> Graduates employed in full-time or part-time work	52.0%

■ <b>Full-time Job Rate</b>	67.4%
Graduates employed in full-time jobs (civilian and military)	
■ <b>Full-time Placement Rate</b>	89.1%
Graduates in full-time jobs (civilian and military) plus part-time work combined with postsecondary enrollment	
■ <b>Further Education Rate</b>	38.4%
Graduates enrolled full-time or part-time in a 4-year, 2-year or other education program	
■ <b>Unable-to-Contact Rate</b>	18.7%
Graduates who could not be contacted during the follow-up phase. JAG's goal is to reduce this rate to less than five percent	
■ <b>Average Hourly Wage</b>	\$7.02

#### **For more information about JAG:**

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## National Guard Youth ChalleNGe

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program intervenes in the lives of at-risk youth, helping them graduate from the program with the values, skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as positive and productive adults. Youth ChalleNGe enrolls unemployed, drug-free, noncourt-involved high school dropouts ages 16–18. The program’s core components emphasize citizenship, academic excellence (GED or high school diploma attainment), life-coping skills, service to community, health and hygiene, job skills training, leadership/followership, and physical fitness.

A two-week PreChalleNGe Phase determines the applicant’s potential for successful program completion. Once accepted, the cadet attends a five-month Residential Phase located on a National Guard base, training center, or school campus. Typically, 100 cadets go through the training together. This phase focuses on basic lifestyle changes approached through a rigorous program of education, training, and service to community.

A year-long mentoring relationship follows the Residential Phase. Each year over 7,500 specially-trained adult mentors, many experienced National Guard members, are matched one-on-one with cadets. These mentors usually come from the young people’s home communities and help them prepare to reenter that community’s life. Mentors offer caring and consistent personal relationships to help youth transition from the structured ChalleNGe environment to self-management. Graduates use this support as they implement the Life Plans developed during the Residential Phase.

The eight core components of the Youth ChalleNGe program are designed to develop the whole person in terms of mind, body, and personal values. Emphasis is on self-discipline, self-esteem, education, and development of healthy lifestyles.

1. **Leadership/Followership**—Cadets identify and apply moral and ethical standards by fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as they live and learn in a structured group environment.
2. **Responsible Citizenship**—In the classroom environment, in the student government process, and through practical experiences within local communities, cadets learn about U.S. government structure and processes and individual rights and responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels.
3. **Service to the Community**—Cadets perform a minimum of 40 hours of service, sometimes through conservation projects. These activi-

ties provide additional opportunities for career exploration as well as enhancement of cadets' awareness of community needs.

4. **Life-Coping Skills**—Cadets gain increased self-esteem and self-discipline through a combination of classroom activities and a structured living environment. Group discussions and classroom activities give cadets an opportunity to develop individual strategies and coping mechanisms for managing personal finances and dealing with emotions, such as anger, grief, frustration, and stress.
5. **Physical Fitness**—All ChalleNGe Programs conduct a physical fitness program using the President's ChalleNGe, a battery of physical tests based on data collected from a variety of sources.
6. **Health and Hygiene**—Cadets examine their physical health and well-being through a holistic approach that studies both the physical and mental effects of substance abuse and sexually-transmitted diseases. In addition, cadets learn the physical and emotional benefits of proper nutrition in classes and structured group discussions.
7. **Job Skills**—Cadets explore careers through career assessments, interest inventories, job-specific skills orientation and awareness, and training in area vocational centers. Specific classroom activities focus on developing individual resumes, completing job applications, preparing for job interviews, and conducting mock interviews.
8. **Academic Excellence**—All ChalleNGe participants attend daily academic classes to prepare them for the General Education Development (GED) credential, a high school diploma, or increased math and reading comprehension. Progress is assessed using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Six sites award a diploma through an agreement with their local high schools or charter schools.

ChalleNGe operates 30 programs in 25 states and Puerto Rico. Current residential enrollment is about 6,800 youth annually. Four-fifths of the participants are male. Some Congressional advocates hope to extend Youth ChalleNGe to all 50 states, serving as many as 20,000 new mentoring relationships annually. Approximately a quarter of cadets are White and about one-half are African American or Latino. New programs are starting in 2006 in Alabama, District of Columbia, and at a second site in California.

Over 65,000 cadets have graduated from the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program in the past 12 years. Of these, over 42,000 earned their GED or high school diploma while in the program. Of the FY 2004 cadets

who successfully completed the Residential Phase (five months), graduates raised their reading levels by 1.7 grades and their math levels by 1.8 grades. Other outcomes for the FY 2004 cadets included:

- 70% completed requirements for a GED or high school diploma
- 590,665 hours of conservation projects and service to community activities were performed with a value of over \$3 million
- 70% of cadets reported positive placement activities in employment, the military, and postsecondary education at the conclusion of the year-long mentoring

### **Funding**

ChalleNGe is considered a cost-effective program at \$14,000 for the complete 17-month program, including both the Residential Phase and Post-Residential Phase of year-long mentoring. The average daily program cost is \$27.45 per youth. This cost compares favorably with \$117.00 for adjudicated youths' residential programs and \$162.00 for incarceration. Under its 1998 authorization, 60% of Youth ChalleNGe's funding comes from the U.S. Federal Government and 40% from the states under agreements with the governors. The FY 2005 federal appropriation, including administration, totals over \$72 million. The states invest \$40.5 million of their own resources.

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## Opportunities Industrialization Centers

Under the banner of “Helping People Help Themselves,” Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC) have been moving people from poverty and welfare to self-sufficiency, employment, and empowerment for over 41 years. Founded by the late Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan in 1964, OIC has its origins in the civil rights movement, the War on Poverty, and the urban unrest of the 1960s when Sullivan rallied 400 ministers in Philadelphia to create employment opportunities for low-income residents in the inner city. Together, they concluded that equal employment opportunity could not become a reality until people were first “qualified educationally, vocationally, motivationally, and attitudinally in a ‘holistic’ approach combining job training and personal development.”

From that turbulent time, OIC evolved into a leading national and international education and training model, having served over three million people worldwide and more than 70,000 in Philadelphia alone. OIC operates 60 affiliate programs in 33 states and the District of Columbia, funded by corporate contributions and federal grants from the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Justice. Another 42 OIC affiliates operate in 18 countries, including several in Africa, Poland, and the Philippines; together these programs train about 10,000 people annually.

OIC’s philosophy of developing the whole person involves life skills development, fundamental education, job skills training, and employment readiness services. Over 40% of OIC’s students are dropouts, 26% are ages 16-21, 66% are female, and 65% are African American. OIC’s prototype job training program and international headquarters remain in Philadelphia. OIC’s Office of National Literacy Programs manages several programs including the Career & Academic Development Institute (CADI). Other OIC programs follow:

### ■ The Quantum Opportunity Program (QOP)\*

QOP is the foundation of OIC’s literacy division. A four-year program for entering 9th grade high-risk youth, QOP offers a curriculum of education, development, and service activities delivered by caring adults who serve as counselors, mentors, role models, disciplinarians, advocates, and problem-solvers. QOP staff are available around the clock, 365 days per year, throughout the student’s four years in the program and beyond. Its motto is: “Once in QOP, Always in QOP.” The cornerstones of the QOP programs are: **education**—self-paced, computer-assisted instruction, including Internet access and instruc-

tion, with heavy emphasis on the fundamentals of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies; **community service**—tutoring elementary students, assisting the homeless and the elderly, cleaning up neighborhoods, and volunteering at local hospitals; and **youth development**—life skills training, job readiness preparation, personal development activities, and cultural enrichment. QOP is particularly attractive to students since it offers financial incentives—stipends and bonuses for participation hours and matching contributions to individual accrual accounts for postsecondary education or advanced skills training.

■ **Integrated Career & Education Program (ICEP)**

ICEP provides a concentration of state-of-the-art educational and functional competencies for older out-of-school youth, complemented by one-on-one counseling, case management, vocational skills training, tuition assistance for college enrollment, and performance-based incentives.

■ **Virtual QOP**

Virtual QOP provides comprehensive education, training, testing, course management, and certification for individuals remanded to juvenile facilities. This population includes youth ages 13–18 who are incarcerated, returning from incarceration, or on probation or parole.

■ **Philadelphia Abstinence Education Project**

This project is part of a national initiative facilitated through select local OIC affiliates. The Abstinence Education Project utilizes the Families United to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (FUPTP) abstinence-until-marriage curriculum. FUPTP has an 18-year history of combating teen pregnancy through its strong focus on life skills.

■ **QOP Plus Program**

QOP Plus is geared toward high achieving graduates of the Career & Academic Development Institute who possess a strong desire to succeed in postsecondary education, including college or the skilled trades.

■ **Saturday Morning Alternative Reach and Teach (SMART)** is an alternative for students who may be expelled or transferred to another school. Parents and guardians also participate in SMART to learn methods of establishing constructive dialogue with their children and improving interpersonal relationships.

- **Virtual Academy** operates after hours and targets select high school seniors in need of additional assistance with a core academic subject in order to fulfill their graduation requirements.
- **The Leon H. Sullivan Opportunity Academy** operates the OIC Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship (YDPA) Program. YDPA program, spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Labor, offers frontline practitioners in human services, such as case managers, job developers, job coaches, youth arts and recreation workers, and other direct service occupations, skills training courses (15 to 30 hours each) in such areas as: case management, coaching, counseling, financial management, corporate planning, motivation, job development strategies, community involvement, team building, and volunteer recruitment and training.

Additional OIC programs include: a YouthBuild site in Racine County, Wisconsin; EXTRA Learning System in Alexandria, Virginia, a K-12 comprehensive learning and program management system designed by the Remediation and Training Institute and delivered over the Internet via local computer networks; Passport-to-Work in Washington, DC, for out-of school youth ages 17–21 that utilizes e-learning coupled with teachers providing instruction in basic and occupational skills, work readiness, and job placement culminating in a work experience practicum that allows participants to demonstrate their new skills in a real work environment; School After School for Successful Youth (SASSY) in Menlo Park, California, where students earn up to 10 credits per semester in a vocational elective that develops academic and job skills, health counseling, and access to local public health providers, leadership opportunities, and job development services for holiday and summer employment; and in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, TEAM (Together, Efficient, Ambitious, Men) and WEBS (Women Empowered by Success) provide opportunities for male and female students ages 16-21 to improve personal image and parenting skills, develop strategies to achieve financial goals and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships through community service projects, resource speakers, and related trips and outings.

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\* For further description and evaluation of the Quantum Opportunities Program, see *Some Things DO Make a Difference for Youth*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum, 1997. and *Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth*, 2006.

## Youth Service and Conservation Corps

Youth Service and Conservation Corps are nonprofit programs that engage youth and young adults (ages 16-25) in full-time community service, training, and education. Today's corps are the heirs of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the 1933-1942 Depression-era program that engaged and supported 3.5 million young men in conservation and natural resource development. They planted 2.5 billion trees, protected 40 million acres of farmland from erosion, drained 248,000 acres of swampland, replanted almost one-million acres of grazing land, built 125,000 miles of roads, fought fires, and created 800 state parks and 52,000 acres of campgrounds. The tangible results of the CCC are seen today in virtually every state in America. But its largest legacy was the hope it provided to young men and their families during the Great Depression. The CCC was disbanded in 1942, after the outbreak of World War II called most men into military service.<sup>151</sup>

Since the late 1950s, the U.S. federal government has experimented with comparatively large investments in a Youth Conservation Corps and a Young Adult Conservation Corps, the latter enjoying an annual budget of about \$260 million. The Reagan administration ended such efforts and the youth corps torch was passed to the states. The California Conservation Corps, started in 1976 and eventually expanded to 11 centers, was a cutting-edge state investment. Other states and, in the 1980s, several urban areas fashioned their own corps models with both public funds and substantial foundation support.

Youth corps were a major part of the 1990s community service movement under both George H.W. Bush's and Bill Clinton's presidential administrations. About 20% of all AmeriCorps members' belonged to youth service and conservation corps.

Since 1985, over 550,000 young people have completed service in youth corps. Currently, the nation's 108 corps operate in communities across 40 states and the District of Columbia. Of these, 90 percent operate year-round, and 10 percent are seasonal. Private nonprofit agencies operate 65% of the corps, while 35% are state or local government agencies. In 2004-2005, the corps enrolled 23,500 young people (59% male, 41% female) making them the country's largest full-time, nonfederal system for youth development. Today, corpsmembers provide their communities with 15.5 million hours of service annually in year-round and summer programs. Over 124,000 adult volunteers work with the corps and contribute an added 2.4 million hours of service.

Corps exist to meet community needs. Some corps tutor children, and



some fight forest fires. Others carry out a wide range of projects on public lands. Still others improve the quality of life in low-income communities by renovating deteriorated housing, doing environmental cleanup, creating parks and gardens, and staffing afterschool programs. Corps reduce the backlog of projects on public lands, including National Parks and National Forests, improve the quality of recreational trails and make other transportation enhancements, help communities cope with natural disasters, promote the re-integration of young offenders into their communities, build “green” houses and provide energy weatherization to low-income communities, assist in the transformation of closed or downsizing military facilities into community resources, provide pathways to higher education for corpsmembers, and bring educational and youth development opportunities to Indian reservations and other Native communities.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, youth corps from California, Washington State, Minnesota, Montana, and New York sent teams to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to help with disaster relief.

### 2004 Corpsmember Characteristics

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Caucasian	43%
African American	24%
Latino	23%
Multi-racial, Native American and Asian	10%
<b>Level of Education Upon Entry</b>	
Lacked a high school diploma	55%
Earned a high school diploma or a GED	22%
Attended some college	17%
Held a college degree	6%
<b>Other Characteristics</b>	
Family income below the poverty line	64%
Previously court-involved	30%
Previously in foster care	10%
Average Age	20 years

Guided by adult leaders who serve as mentors, role models, technical trainers, and supervisors, crews of 8 to 12 corpsmembers and one team leader carry out a wide range of conservation, urban infrastructure improvement, and human service projects. In return for their efforts, corpsmembers receive a living allowance, classroom training to improve basic competencies, a chance to earn a GED or high school diploma, experiential and environmental service-learning-based education, generic and technical skills training, a wide range of support services, and, in many cases, an AmeriCorps post-service educational award of up to \$4,725. (There were 5,394 full or partial awards from 2001-2003 and 3,134 thus far in the three-year award cycle running until 2006. Many more corpsmembers chose to enter the workforce, rather than enter postsecondary education, after graduation.

Corps are versatile, cost-effective programs that allow young people to accomplish important projects while developing employment and citizenship skills. Sally Prouty, President of the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC) and former head of the Ohio Civilian Conservation Corps, commented on the diversity of youth corps programs around the country: "Successful corps share common core elements: they build on corpsmembers' strengths; provide an environment in which every corpsmember can experience success; offer consistent contact and nurturing with a caring adult; stress leadership development, creative problem-solving, the ability to work as a member of a team; and focus on the future and what can be." Together, these elements give any corpsmember a "second chance" to succeed in life.

### **Evaluation**

A rigorous multisite control group evaluation by Abt Associates and Brandeis University underscored the value of corps for communities and participants. *Promising Strategies for Young People and Their Communities* reported significant employment and earnings gains by corpsmembers compared to the control group. Positive outcomes were particularly striking for young African American men who also exhibited "increased social and personal responsibility and higher educational aspirations, and were more likely to vote." Arrest rates dropped by one-third among all corpsmembers; out-of-wedlock pregnancy rates fell among female corpsmembers. Overall, the corps generated \$1.60 in immediate benefits for every \$1.00 of costs. A second generation Youth Corps study will be underway in 2006 testing the hypothesis that corps participation generates positive and measurable behavioral and attitudinal outcomes in educational attainment, employment success, workplace skills, civic engagement, and avoidance of risky behaviors. Funded by the

Corporation for National and Community Service, it will be the largest-ever study of national service programs.

### **Funding**

Unlike the original Civilian Conservation Corps, modern corps are state and local programs that do not enjoy a dedicated source of federal funds. As a result, corps must be highly entrepreneurial organizations, skilled at accessing diverse resources. In 2004-2005, corps budgets nationwide totaled \$303 million. They derived 20% of their funds from a variety of federal sources, 37% from state, county, and municipal appropriations, and 7% from foundations and corporate grants. Some 36% of revenues came from sponsored work projects or fee-for-service contracts with public and private nonprofit agencies, in which corps met the test of the economic marketplace.

The National Association of Service and Conservation Corps was formed in 1985 when the nation's first 24 directors banded together to advocate for support and to establish a clearinghouse of information on how to start and run "best practice" corps. Now 20 years old, NASCC is the voice of the Corps movement in Washington. It advocates for the growth and sustainability of the nation's programs for youth development by advancing quality programs, providing program assessment, training, and technical assistance, and administering and building partnerships to support corps. NASCC is also one of the principal creators and advocates for the Campaign for Youth ([www.campaignforyouth.org](http://www.campaignforyouth.org)), along with other youth development and career preparation programs.

NASCC operates an AmeriCorps national direct grant, "Rural Response," to increase the capacity of rural areas in five states to do disaster prevention, mitigation, and relief. It also runs the large, multisite AmeriCorps Education Award Program, ensuring that graduating corpsmembers have the opportunity to access higher education or technical training. In conjunction with the National Park Service it operates the Public Lands Corps, which distributes \$10.3 million to 22 corps nationwide to carry out visitor enhancement and backlogged maintenance in National Parks.

In 2003, NASCC completed a four-year \$3.8 million national Welfare-to-Work project funded by the US Department of Labor. The project engaged eight corps in four states that moved young adults from welfare rolls and lives of dependence into a corps experience and toward gainful employment and independent lives. Project participants realized significant gains in post-Corps job placement, employment retention and earnings. The Welfare-to-Work project built on NASCC's experience with a five-year, foundation-funded Corps-to-Career Initiative that involved 26 Corps in 10 states. That

initiative helped catapult corpsmembers into the labor market, higher education, living-wage jobs, and educational achievement.

During 2006-2007, 265 corpsmembers will be helping with Hurricane Katrina rehabilitation in Gulf Coast communities under a \$1.6 million grant from the Corporation for Community and National Service.

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## YouthBuild

YouthBuild’s mission is to “unleash the intelligence and positive energy of low-income youth to rebuild their communities and their own lives with a commitment to work, education, family, and citizenship.” In YouthBuild, unemployed and undereducated young people, ages 16 to 24, work toward completion of a GED or high school diploma while learning work and social skills in the process of building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people. YouthBuild programs emphasize leadership development, community service, and the creation of a positive community of adults and youth committed to each other’s success.

Local YouthBuild programs are small, supportive communities usually operated by a nonprofit, independent, community-based, or faith-based organization. The program began in 1978 when Dorothy Stoneman, founder and president of YouthBuild USA, asked neighborhood teens in East Harlem how they would improve their community if they had adults supporting them. The students answered, “We’d rebuild the houses. We’d take empty buildings back from the drug dealers and eliminate crime.” Together they formed the Youth Action Program and renovated the first YouthBuild building. They replicated the program in five locations in New York City during the 1980’s. In 1990, YouthBuild USA was founded to coordinate national replication. In 1992, federal legislation was passed authorizing a YouthBuild program in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under Subtitle D of Title IV of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act. In 2005 the Administration proposed moving YouthBuild from HUD to the U.S. Department of Labor. This transfer is under consideration in Congress for Fiscal Year 2007.

YouthBuild USA is the national intermediary and support center for local YouthBuild programs. It serves as HUD’s contractor to provide guidance and quality assurance in program implementation and it orchestrates advocacy for public funds, offers leadership opportunities for youth and staff, supports research and data collection to understand best practices, and distributes grants and loans from government and philanthropies to YouthBuild affiliates. Currently, it is managing a national direct YouthBuild AmeriCorps program and an education award AmeriCorps program for over 50 YouthBuild programs; a Katrina Recovery AmeriCorps grant for the Gulf Coast; an Ex-Offender Re-entry YouthBuild project at 30 programs for the U.S. Department of Labor; a national Individual Development Account program for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and a national small schools initiative at 23 YouthBuild programs for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

YouthBuild USA also contributes to the broader youth and community development fields in order to diminish poverty. The YouthBuild Coalition is supported by more than a thousand organizations in 49 states.

### **YouthBuild Program**

YouthBuild students spend 6 to 24 months full-time in the program (averaging 8.2 months), dividing their time equally between the construction site and the YouthBuild alternative school. Program components include:

**Housing Construction**—Students provide a valuable community service by building homes for homeless and low-income people in their communities. Projects range from restoring multiunit buildings to constructing new homes. Students are paid a stipend for their construction work, which varies by local site.

**Education**—Students prepare for high school diplomas, GEDs, vocational school, or college. The curriculum integrates academics with life skills. Classes are small, which allows for one-on-one attention to students. Elements of the education program include:

- **Job Training**—Students build sound work habits as well as decision-making and time-management skills. They develop career plans and prepare for job interviews. At the job site they receive training from industry-qualified construction instructors.
- **Leadership Development**—Participants learn to advocate for issues that concern them and their communities, and to take responsibility for themselves and their families. Students share in the governance of their program through an elected policy committee.
- **Counseling**—Counseling and referrals are offered to address such issues as child care, transportation, or substance abuse. Students are assigned a counselor, with whom they meet regularly.
- **Graduate Support**—YouthBuild graduates have access to resources and support to assist them as they advance their careers, go to college, build assets, and become role models. Many graduates leave with an AmeriCorps education award earned through their service producing affordable housing.

In 2006, there were 226 YouthBuild programs in 43 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, engaging approximately 8,000 young adults annually. Students have produced 15,000 units of affordable housing since YouthBuild became a federal program in 1992.

Forty YouthBuild programs have established public charter schools or other cooperative arrangements with their local school districts authorizing them to award high school diplomas in addition to GEDs. Obtaining a public charter school also enables a program to access state education dollars to support their academic program.

### **Results**

Nationally, 73% of YouthBuild students are men and 27% are women. In 2004, 47% were African American, 24% Latino, 23% white, 3% Native American, and 2% Asian American. In addition, 28% of YouthBuild students were parents, 88% entered the program without their GED or diploma, 32% had been adjudicated, and 28% were receiving public assistance prior to joining YouthBuild. The average reading grade level at entrance was 7.2, according to the TABE test.

Despite these odds, as of 2004, 59% of participants completed the program and 80% of graduates went on to postsecondary education or employment. Average program attendance was 82% and 33% of those enrollees without a diploma or a GED earned one. At graduation, initial pay averaged \$8.15 an hour.

### **Funding**

Each YouthBuild program secures its own funding, generally a mix of government (federal, state, and local) and private support. They must compete annually for federal HUD funds. In FY 2004, HUD awarded \$54 million in grants to 93 local YouthBuild programs, 24 of which were new YouthBuild sites. Local YouthBuild programs have raised over \$1 billion in non-HUD funds since 1994 to supplement the federal appropriations.

YouthBuild USA has an annual budget of \$17 million, \$9 million of which is passed on to local affiliates as described above. It receives major private support from the Ford, Charles Stewart Mott, Bill & Melinda Gates, and W.K. Kellogg Foundations. Its primary corporate support comes from Home Depot and the Bank of America. It has received major public grants and contracts from HUD, the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

In June 2004, YouthBuild USA received \$12.2 million from the U.S. Department of Labor's Incarcerated Youth Reentry Program. The two-year award was then re-granted by YouthBuild USA to 30 local YouthBuild programs. Each of the 30 programs received the funds because they admit a specified number of students with criminal records into the programs, for a total

of 325 youth per year. Some of the students are referred by the courts, some enter directly from jail, others find their own way to YouthBuild. YouthBuild USA provides training, technical assistance, and data management for all 30 sites. The programs track the outcomes of all students, both graduates and early leavers, for five years. The recidivism rate for YouthBuild graduates previously convicted of a felony is 15% or less.

In 2005, YouthBuild USA was awarded \$4.8 million for its 2005-2006 AmeriCorps program to support 997 members and an education award-only program to provide college tuition awards to another 690 members.

YouthBuild USA receives a \$700,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the YouthBuild National Individual Development Account (IDA) Program. IDA fosters the economic independence and leadership of low-income YouthBuild graduates by matching their savings for defined purposes. Under a partnership with local YouthBuild programs, YouthBuild USA offers technical assistance, provides overall program management, and raises the federal match and half the private match. Local affiliates select the IDA participants and raise \$1,000 for each of them. When a YouthBuild graduate saves \$800 through this IDA program, it is matched with a \$4,000 award that can be used only for higher education, homeownership, or starting a small business.

The average total cost per full-time YouthBuild participant is \$20,000 a year, including stipends for work performed. This is less than other full-time options for unemployed young adults, including residential programs such as boot camps, prison, and many colleges.

Most YouthBuild programs get three to six applicants for every student opening. In 2005 the programs had to turn away 14,000 applicants; 900 in Philadelphia, 600 in Newark, 400 in East Harlem, and so on. The goal of the YouthBuild Coalition is to obtain sufficient resources to welcome every eligible applicant.

In 2006, YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs across the country are mobilizing to send hundreds of members to Gulfport, MS, to build 150 to 300 homes for people whose houses were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. The members will live in a Navy compound, with 35 staying for one year and 350 others coming for 2 to 6 week periods. This project is supported by a \$2.9 million grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

### **Recent External Evaluation**

*Life After YouthBuild: 900 Graduates Reflect on Their Lives, Dreams, and Experiences*, conducted by researchers at Brandeis and Temple Universities, was released in June 2004. This two-pronged national research project



surveyed 882 YouthBuild graduates from more than 60 local programs and conducted in-depth interviews with a cross-section of 57 randomly-selected graduates from eight programs. The study was designed to examine the long-term successes and challenges of YouthBuild graduates. The study confirmed that YouthBuild students came from highly disadvantaged groups facing numerous obstacles to success. Key findings include:

- 75% are currently enrolled in postsecondary education or in jobs averaging \$10 an hour
- 76% are receiving none of three government supports (food stamps, welfare, or unemployment benefits)
- 68% are registered to vote
- 47% have voted
- 92% voiced positive emotions, a solid self-image, and optimism about the future
- 65% believe they will live an average of 32 years longer than they had expected to live before joining YouthBuild

**For more information about YouthBuild USA :**

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## Notes

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- [1] Typically, these young people are largely undereducated and unskilled, are not currently in school or in jobs, and need opportunities to further their education and prepare for the workforce. They are the “The Forgotten Half,” those approximately ten million 18 - 24 year-olds who neither complete high school nor continue their formal education beyond high school graduation (Halperin, S.) *The Forgotten Half Revisited*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum, 1998.)
- [2] The major employment training legislation at the time was the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1983 which provided job training services for economically disadvantaged adults and youth. Two titles of this legislation focused on youth: (a) summer jobs and training, which included a range of activities during the summer vacation months to enhance basic skills, encourage school completion, provide exposure to the world of work, and enhance citizenship skills; and (b) year-round training and employment programs for both in- and out-of-school youth, which offered limited internships in the private sector, school-to-work transition services, and alternative high school services.
- [3] Evaluations concluded that the effects of JTPA programs on youth were zero or negative when judged by performance outcomes of improved employment and wages. See Grubb, W.N. (1995) *Evaluating Job Training Programs in the United States: Evidence and Explanations*. National Center for Research on Vocational Education Technical Assistance Report, MDS-1047. University of California at Berkeley.
- [4] See American Youth Policy Forum. *Some Things DO Make A Difference for Youth: A Compendium of Evaluations of Youth Programs and Practices* (1997) and *MORE Things That DO Make A Difference for Youth* (1999) at <http://www.aypf.org>. Each of these Compendia contains nearly 50 summaries of evaluations of youth interventions that were shown to improve the lives of young people. In an easy-to-read format, these summaries highlight research findings, describe the key components, and share what is known about the ingredients of success underlying each program.
- [5] *History of the Youth Corps Movement*. Retrieved 12 August 2002, from: <http://nascc.org/history2.html>.
- [6] See YouthBuild USA website: <http://www.youthbuild.org>.
- [7] Blank, M. et al. (2003) *Local Intermediary Organizations: Connecting the Dots for Children, Youth, and Families*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.



## AYPF Publications

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*Most AYPF publications are available for free download at [www.aypf.org/publications](http://www.aypf.org/publications). To purchase a hard copy, please fax the order form from our website to 202-775-9733 or mail to AYPF, 1836 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Publication prices include postage and handling. For inquiries, call 202-775-9731.*

### **Whatever It Takes: How Twelve Communities Are Reconnecting Out-of-School Youth**

Documents what committed educators, policymakers, and community leaders across the country are doing to reconnect out-of-school youth to the social and economic mainstream. Provides background on the serious high school dropout problem and describes in-depth what twelve communities are doing to reconnect dropouts to education and employment training. Includes descriptions of major national program models serving out-of-school youth. **online only**

### **Enhancing High School Reform: Lessons from Site Visits to Four Cities**

Summarizes successful practices and policies of a number of innovative high schools visited by national policymakers on recent site visits. AYPF introduced these policymakers to the reform-minded leaders of transformed high schools to help them understand the challenges and possibilities of high school redesign. **online only**

### **Guide for the Powerless, and Those Who Don't Know Their Own Power**

Acquire essential political skills and attitudes to engage productively with both elected and appointed officials at all levels of government. This easy-to-read guide is a perfect introduction to effective citizenship for community leaders, educators, students, youth workers and other human service providers. (Over 90,000 in print with numerous reprints.) **print only, \$3**

### **MORE Things That DO Make a Difference for Youth, Vol. II**

A Compendium of 64 more evaluations of youth programs, including career academies, school-to-work, Tech Prep, school reform, juvenile justice, and related areas of youth policy. **online and in print, \$10**

### **Some Things That DO Make a Difference for Youth: A Compendium of Evaluations of Youth Programs and Practices**

Summarizes 69 evaluations of youth interventions in education, employment and training, mentoring, service-learning, and youth development to craft strategies affecting services and support for our nation's youth, particularly disadvantaged young people. **online and in print, \$10**

### **Finance and Resource Issues in High School Reform**

Summarizes discussions among education and youth development leaders regarding financial and resource issues in high school reform. These issues were identified as serious obstacles to meaningful reform in the 2000 American Youth Policy Forum report, *High Schools of the Millennium*. Addresses challenges in four distinct areas: 1) allocation and alignment of resources to support standards-based reform and higher expectations for all students, 2) generating resources for the interventions and specialized programs necessary to support the learning of students with special needs, 3) allocating resources to support learning in alternative education settings, and 4) developing funding strategies for dual enrollment programs. **online and in print, \$5**

### **Essentials of High School Reform**

Speaks to a concern that much attention is being paid to greater academic achievement in core subjects, resulting in little focus on other outcomes that youth need to be successful: communication, teamwork, analytical and interpersonal skills. Contends that students also need to learn about potential careers, have a familiarity with the world of work beyond the classroom walls, and develop occupational competencies. Summarizes roundtables that offered policy recommendations and practical advice on how to structure contextual teaching and learning and alternative assessments. **online and in print, \$8**

### **Shaping the Future of American Youth: Youth Policy in the 21st Century**

AYPF celebrated its tenth anniversary in January 2003 by inviting 14 of America's leading experts on youth affairs—analysts, activists, advocates, institution-builders—to write the essays and commentaries in this volume. These leaders accepted the challenge to step back from the press of their fully-committed working days and reconsider the development of their particular field of youth affairs over the past decade, take a leap into the future, and sketch their personal hopes and visions for a positive and creative future for American youth. **online and in print, \$8**

**Rigor and Relevance: A New Vision for Career and Technical Education**

What should the role of the federal government be in Career and Technical Education (CTE)? AYPF organized a series of discussion groups with a diverse range of individuals to focus on this question. The paper provides a vision of reformed CTE, with career pathways, links to business, stronger connections from high school to postsecondary education, and more challenging academics. **online only**

**Opening Career Paths For Youth: What Can Be Done? Who Can Do It?**

The creators of Cornell University's pioneering Youth Apprenticeship Demonstration Project share practical lessons in implementing essential components of school-to-career programs. **print only, \$2**

**The American School-to-Career Movement: A Background Paper for Policymakers**

Interviews and analysis of current efforts to link schooling and the world of employment with essential tasks to be addressed by each of the social partners in the community. **print only, \$2**

**Improving the Transition from School to Work in the United States**

A detailed, clear analysis of the transition of American youth from school to employment. Offers strategies for improving career preparation and makes recommendations for federal policy. **print only, \$2**

**Helping Youth Succeed Through Out-of-School Time Programs**

Reviews current research literature on out-of-school time (OST) programs, especially with regard to their effectiveness; explores the range of OST activities as employed by various youth-serving sectors; considers the untapped possibilities of OST programs to meet the needs of young people, including academic enhancement, career and college preparation, leadership development, and civic engagement; and provides policy guidance on how to sustain high quality OST programs as part of a system of supports for older youth. **online only**

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