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Vulnerable Youth: Employment and Job Training Programs

Updated August 31, 2020

Congressional Research Service
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R40929

CRS REPORT
Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

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SUMMARY

R40929

August 31, 2020

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Vulnerable Youth: Employment and Job Training Programs

In an increasingly global economy, and with retirement underway for the Baby Boomer generation, Congress has generally indicated a strong interest in ensuring that today's young people have the educational attainment and employment experience needed to become highly skilled workers, contributing taxpayers, and successful participants in civic life. Beginning in the early 2000s, young people ages 16 to 24 began to experience a more pronounced decline in their labor force participation rate and employment, along with a corresponding increase in unemployment. These labor force indicators have generally persisted following the recession of 2007 to 2009. Further, certain young people—such as high school dropouts, current and former foster youth, and other at-risk populations—face obstacles to completing school and entering the workforce.

Since the 1930s, federal job training and employment programs and policies have sought to connect vulnerable youth to work and school. Generally, these young people have been defined as being at-risk because they are economically disadvantaged and have a barrier to employment. During the Great Depression, the focus was on employing young men who were idle through public works and other projects. The employment programs from this era included an educational component to encourage youth to obtain their high school diplomas. Beginning in the 1960s, the federal government started funding programs for low-income youth that address their multiple needs through job training, educational services, and supportive services.

Currently, there are four major federal youth employment and job training programs, all of which are administered by the Department of Labor's (DOL's) Employment and Training Administration (ETA). These programs generally have a common purpose—to provide low-income youth with educational and employment opportunities and access to leadership development and community service activities.

- The *Youth Activities* program offers job training and other services through what are known as local workforce development boards, whose members are appointed by the chief local elected official(s). The program was funded at $903.4 million in FY2019 and $913.4 million in FY2020.
- *Job Corps* provides career and technical training in a number of trades at 121 residential centers throughout the country. The program received annual FY2019 and FY2020 appropriations of $1.7 billion.
- *YouthBuild* engages youth in educational services and job training that focus on the construction trades. YouthBuild received FY2019 and FY2020 appropriations of $89.5 million and $94.5 million, respectively.
- The *Reentry Employment Opportunities* program, formerly known as the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program, includes job training and other services for juvenile and adult offenders. The youth component of the program was funded at $49.5 million in FY2019 and $26.6 million in FY2020, out of total appropriations of $93 million and $98 million, respectively.

Generally, the programs are authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, P.L. 113-128) through FY2020. WIOA does not explicitly authorize the Reentry Employment Opportunities program; however, funds have been appropriated annually under the authority of Section 169 of WIOA and the Second Chance Act, which authorizes supports for individuals transitioning from confinement to the community. Section 169 authorizes evaluations and research.

Since the recession began in February 2020, the youth job training and employment programs have not received additional appropriations beyond the original funds provided for FY2020.

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Introduction

In an increasingly competitive economy, and with retirement underway for the Baby Boomer generation, Congress has generally indicated a strong interest in ensuring that today's young people have the educational attainment and employment experience necessary to become highly skilled workers, contributing taxpayers, and successful participants in civic life. Challenges in the current economy, however, have heightened concern among some policymakers that many young people may not be prepared to fill these roles.

The employment levels for youth under age 25 have declined since 2000, and more recently, their rate of unemployment has increased during the recession that began in February 2020 following the onset of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency.[1] Certain young people in particular—including those from low-income families, those who have dropped out, foster youth, and other at-risk populations—face barriers to completing school and entering the workforce. Since the 1960s, federal job training programs and policies have sought to connect these youth to education and employment pathways. Contemporary federal employment and job training programs with this same purpose include the Youth Activities program; Job Corps; YouthBuild; and the Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) program, which includes a youth component. These programs provide a range of services and supports to vulnerable youth.[2] Some of the programs concentrate on specific job trades and/or serve targeted at-risk populations. The programs are authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, P.L. 113-128), and are administered by the Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA).[3]

This report provides an overview of the primary federal employment and job training programs for vulnerable young people. It begins with a discussion of the current challenges in preparing all young people today for the workforce. The report then provides a chronology of job training and employment programs for at-risk youth that began in the 1930s and were expanded or modified from the 1960s through the 1990s. It goes on to discuss the four youth programs authorized under WIOA, and draws comparisons between these programs. Following this section is a detailed discussion of each of the programs, including program purpose and structure, participants, financial allocations, and performance oversight.

[1] CRS Report R42519, *Youth and the Labor Force: Background and Trends*; and CRS Insight IN11491, *Youth Labor Force Indicators in the Context of COVID-19*.

[2] Since the recession began in February 2020, these programs have not received additional appropriations beyond the original funds provided for FY2020.

[3] Two rules accompany the WIOA law. U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA), "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Final Rule," 81 *Federal Register* 56072, August 19, 2016; and DOL, ETA; and Department of Education, "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Joint Rule for Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions; Final Rule," 81 *Federal Register* 56072, August 19, 2016. See other DOL, ETA resources: "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act," http://www.doleta.gov/wioa/; Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 19-14, "Vision for the Workforce System and Initial Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014," February 19, 2015; and TEGL No. 23-14, "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program Transition." See also, CRS Report R44252, *The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the One-Stop Delivery System*.

Context

As they leave high school, either through graduation or by dropping out, young people can pursue various options. Youth with a high school diploma may attend a two- or four-year college, enlist in the armed services, or secure part-time or full-time employment (sometimes paired with attending school). Youth without a high school diploma can do some of these same things, but their opportunities are more limited. They cannot enroll in a four-year college or, in most cases, enlist in the military. These youth will likely have difficulty supporting themselves if they do work.[4]

Individuals who drop out are less likely to secure employment and have lower earning power. As the level of education rises, the unemployment rate decreases and median weekly earnings increase for those who work.[5] In 2019, before the current recession, adults with a high school degree had an unemployment rate of 3.7% and weekly earnings of $833. This is compared to an unemployment rate of 2.2% and $1,248 in weekly earnings for college graduates. The costs of dropping out extend beyond the individual's foregone job opportunities and lower wages. According to the research literature, costs can be incurred by society overall. These costs include possible lost payroll tax revenue and increased transfers for welfare payments, imprisonment, and programs to re-enroll dropouts in school.[6]

Federal youth employment and job training programs have long targeted services to young people who leave school before graduating or are in school and may be vulnerable to dropping out. The purpose of these programs, as they currently exist, is to provide job training, employment, educational services, and social services that can help youth become economically self-sufficient and achieve their career and academic goals. These contemporary programs also emphasize leadership development and community service. Note that while youth employment and job training programs are also enhanced with state workforce and other dollars, the extent to which this support is provided is unclear.

History of Federal Youth Employment and Job Training Programs[7]

For more than 90 years, the federal government has played a role in helping young people secure employment and achieve academic success. Generally, these young people have been defined as being vulnerable in some way—either because they are economically disadvantaged and/or have a barrier to securing employment or completing their education. During the Great Depression, the focus was on employing idle young men in public works and other projects. The employment

[4] For further information about youth prospects in the labor market, see CRS Report R42519, *Youth and the Labor Force: Background and Trends*; and CRS Report R40535, *Disconnected Youth: A Look at 16 to 24 Year Olds Who Are Not Working or In School*.

[5] DOL, BLS, *Unemployment Rates and Earnings by Educational Attainment, 2019*, September 2019.

[6] Northeastern University, Center for Labor Market Studies, *The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Joblessness and Jailing of High School Dropouts and the High Cost for Taxpayers*, October 1, 2009; Paul E. Barton, *One Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities*, Educational Testing Services, February 2009; and Clive R. Belfield, Henry M. Levin, and Rachel Rosen, *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth*, prepared for the Corporation for National and Community Service and the White House Council for Economic Solutions, January 2012.

[7] Unless otherwise noted, this section draws heavily on an archived report by the Congressional Research Service, *Youth Employment: A Summary History of Major Federal Programs*, 1933-1976. Available to congressional clients upon request.

programs from this era included an educational component to encourage youth to obtain their high school diplomas. Beginning in the 1960s, the federal government started funding programs for low-income youth, such as Job Corps, that address their multiple needs, including job training, educational services, housing, and supportive services. During the 1970s and 1980s, Job Corps was expanded and the federal government funded additional programs for both in-school and out-of-school youth. Funding was also appropriated to test the efficacy of some of these programs. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 extended earlier programs and created new ones, with the intention of providing more seamless job training and education services for youth year-round. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act maintained these programs and changed some of their requirements. Generally, these programs are targeted to teenagers and young adults, usually to age 24, who are at risk of dropping out or have already done so.

Depression Era

Prior to the 1930s, the federal government's involvement in youth employment was primarily limited to regulating child labor.[8] The Great Depression served as a catalyst for the creation of federal programs to employ and educate young people who were out of work or at risk of dropping out of school due to financial difficulties. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) began in 1933 as an employment program for unemployed males ages 18 to 25 (and veterans, Indians, and residents of territories of any age) to participate in projects planned by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture. These projects focused on creating and improving infrastructure, transportation, and recreational services, among other categories. The young men lived in camps and were provided with an allowance, food, and medical care. The CCC also included an educational component, which taught nearly 35,000 participants to read and write and assisted a smaller number with attaining their high school and college degrees. Until the program ended in 1945, it served nearly 3 million men, of whom approximately 10% were veterans.

Other Depression era programs—the Student Aid program, Works Project program, and Guidance and Placement program—were administered by the National Youth Administration, which was created as part of the now-defunct Works Progress Administration by an executive order in 1935. The programs provided funds for part-time employment of needy high school, college, and graduate students to assist them in completing school, as well as funds for part-time employment for unemployed out-of-school youth. These young people, all of whom were ages 16 through 25, were employed in a number of broad areas, including construction, clerical work, and research. These programs served hundreds of thousands of youth before they were discontinued in the early 1940s.

War on Poverty Programs

The 1960s marked a period of federal efforts to assist poor and disadvantaged children, adolescents, and their families through job training and other programs. In response to concerns about high unemployment, the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 (P.L. 87-415) and subsequent amendments to it authorized funding for employment training. Specifically, amendments to the act in 1963 (P.L. 88-214) encouraged the Department of Labor to provide assistance to youth so that they might be able to successfully enter the labor force, and expanded the share of job training funds that could be used to train youth under age 22 from 5% to 25%.

[8] John H. Bremner, Tamara K. Hareven, and Robert M. Mennel, eds., *Children & Youth in America*, Vol. II: 1866-1932, Parts 1-6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 687-749.

Further, federal funding was first authorized through the 1963 amendments to provide employment opportunities to youth from low-income families.

President Lyndon B. Johnson's subsequent War on Poverty established new youth-targeted programs in job training and educational assistance under an initiative known as the Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC). The NYC was made up of work training programs, the Work Study program, and Job Corps. The work training programs provided work experience, job training, and supportive services to low-income unemployed youth ages 16 through 21 who were in school or out of school, including dropouts. The Work Study program was modeled on the Depression-era Student Aid program and provided money to high school and college students from low-income families who needed earnings to stay in school. The program continues today for college students. Job Corps, which also continues today, was established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-452) to provide educational and job training opportunities to disadvantaged youth at residential and non-residential centers. (See subsequent discussion on Job Corps for further information.)

Expanding Youth Programs

The 1973 Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA, P.L. 93-203) was the first of four laws enacted during the 1970s and 1980s that focused greater federal attention on youth employment and training. The second law, the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project Act (YEDPA, P.L. 95-93), was enacted in 1977 and established a variety of employment, training, and demonstration programs for youth. The 1982 Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA, P.L. 97-300) repealed CETA. JTPA was subsequently repealed by WIA. Separately, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (STWOA, P.L. 103-239) supported the development of programs that encouraged students to pursue learning opportunities and experiences that incorporated occupational skills. Activities authorized under these acts were administered by DOL. STWOA was additionally carried out by the Department of Education (ED).

Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA)

As amended through 1978, CETA authorized a range of employment and training programs for adults and youth. Job Corps and the Summer Program for Economically Disadvantaged Youth (SPEDY) were the primary youth programs authorized under CETA. SPEDY provided funding to employers to hire low-income youth ages 14 through 21 during the summer months. Youth served as assistants in hospitals, libraries, community service organizations, and schools, among other settings.

The Youth Employment and Demonstrations Projects Act (YEDPA), signed into law in 1977, amended CETA.[9] YEDPA increased authorization of appropriations for Job Corps and SPEDY and authorized three additional programs targeted to "economically disadvantaged" (defined under the act) youth ages 14 through 21: Youth Employment and Training Programs (YETP), Youth Community Conservation and Improvement Projects (YCCIP), and Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects (YIEPP).[10] YEDPA was passed in response to high levels of

[9] Much of this section on YEDPA was drawn from Charles L. Betsey, Robinson G. Hollister, and Mary R. Papageorgiou, eds., *Youth Employment and Training Programs: The YEDPA Years*, National Research Council, Washington, DC, 1985. (Hereinafter, Charles L. Betsey, Robinson G. Hollister, and Mary R. Papageorgiou, *Youth Employment and Training Programs*.)

[10] A fourth program, the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), was operated by the Department of Agriculture

unemployment among youth relative to adults, even during periods of economic expansion, and growing gaps in youth unemployment among whites and blacks, males and females, and in-school and out-of-school youth. The programs were carried out during the Carter Administration, from 1977 through 1981. Over this period, YEDPA served 6.1 million youth.

YETP and YCCIP were intended to meet the immediate employment needs of youth, and funding for the programs was allocated primarily on a formula basis. YETP activities included work experience, pre-employment skills, and an emphasis on the transition from school to work. YCCIP was intended to assist unemployed, out-of-school youth obtain a high school degree, conditional on satisfactory performance in work and school. Further, it was aimed at improving coordination between the job training and educational systems as a means of addressing the dropout problem.[11] Finally, YIEPP funded evaluations to test the efficacy of demonstration programs; the other two programs included funding for demonstration programs. During the YEDPA years, more than 60 major demonstrations were funded in about 300 sites, operated by DOL in cooperation with six other federal agencies and private nonprofit intermediaries.

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)

CETA was repealed in 1982 by the Job Training Partnership Act.[12] JTPA was distinct from its predecessor because it emphasized that states and localities, rather than the federal government, had the primary responsibility for administering job training and employment programs. Funding was appropriated under JTPA through FY1999. JTPA programs focused on the training needs of "economically disadvantaged" (defined under the act) youth and adults facing significant barriers to employment. JTPA programs included the Summer Youth Employment and Training program, the Youth Training Program, and Job Corps.

The Summer Youth Employment and Training program provided employment and training activities during the summer months for low-income youth ages 14 through 21 to strengthen basic educational skills, encourage school completion, provide work exposure, and enhance citizenship skills. In the summer of 1997, an estimated 500,000 youth participated. The Youth Training Program was established by the Job Training Reform Amendments of 1992 (P.L. 102-367), which amended JTPA to address concerns that school dropouts were not being reached by the then-existing combined program for disadvantaged adults and youth, and that the program primarily served youth who were the easiest to place in jobs and required the fewest services.[13] The program was year-round and provided direct services, such as on-the-job training, tutoring and study skills training, and school-to-work transition services. It also provided training-related and

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and Department of the Interior, in cooperation with DOL, and targeted unemployed youth ages 16 to 23 who were not necessarily disadvantaged. This program operated year-round and was separate from a similarly named program, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). YCC was permanently authorized by the Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-378) and continues to operate.

[11] Other parts of YEDPA required close coordination with the school system. According to an assessment of the act's implementation, the schools maintained their focus on in-school youth and provided essentially the same set of educational services as usual. The lack of influence of YEDPA on schools may be largely attributed to the schools' resistance to allocating services according to income and the schools' perception that their mission was exclusively to educate students. Charles L. Betsey, Robinson G. Hollister, and Mary R. Papageorgiou, *Youth Employment and Training Programs*, pp. 84-87.

[12] Unless otherwise noted, this section was drawn heavily from an archived report by the Congressional Research Service, *The Job Training Partnership Act: A Compendium of Programs*. Available to congressional clients upon request.

[13] Archived report by the Congressional Research Service, *Job Training Partnership Act: Legislation and Budget Issues*. Available to congressional clients upon request.

supportive services, including job search assistance, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, and cash incentives based on attendance and performance in a program. Economically disadvantaged in-school and out-of-school youth ages 16 through 21 were eligible, but 50% of participants had to be out of school. Further, at least 65% of youth had to be hard to serve, meaning they were school dropouts (if out of school), pregnant or parenting, or offenders, among other qualifications. In program year 1997, an estimated 107,000 youth participated. JTPA was replaced by WIA.

School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA)

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 authorized the School-to-Work (STW) program administered jointly by DOL and the Department of Education through the National School-to-Work Office.[14] The program was funded from FY1994 through FY2000. The law supported the development of programs with three main elements: work-based learning to provide participating students with work experience and on-the-job training; school-based learning, involving upgrading and integrating the occupational skills participating students learn in school and the workplace; and program coordination to aid the planning, implementation, and operation of the program. STWOA grants were competitively awarded to states, local partnerships, programs for Indian youth, and U.S. territories to implement school-to-work systems. In addition, STWOA authorized national activities, such as research and demonstrations. Some school-to-work programs that received seed money from the federal program continue to operate today.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 replaced JTPA. WIA includes titles that authorize programs for job training and related services (Title I), adult education and literacy (Title II), employment services (Title III), and vocational rehabilitation (Title IV). Title I of WIA authorized job training programs for youth, adults, and dislocated workers. Funding was authorized for the program through FY2003, and Congress continued to appropriate funding for the programs in subsequent years.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Congress took steps toward reauthorizing WIA from the 108th to the 113th Congresses, ultimately passing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) on July 9, 2014. President Obama signed the bill into law (P.L. 113-128) on July 22, 2014. As of July 1, 2015, the law superseded WIA. Like WIA, WIOA includes titles that authorize programs for job training and related services (Title I), adult education and literacy (Title II), employment services (Title III), and vocational rehabilitation (Title IV). The major job training programs for youth and other workers are authorized in Title I.

Overview of Youth Programs Authorized Under WIOA

WIOA authorizes, and appropriations laws have provided funding for, four youth job training and employment programs:

- *Youth Workforce Investment Activities Program* (*Youth Activities program*), a formula grant program for state and local workforce development boards

[14] Archived report by the Congressional Research Service, *The School-to-Work Opportunities Act*. Available to congressional clients upon request.

(WDBs) that includes employment and other services that are provided year-round;

- *Job Corps*, a program that provides job training and related services primarily at residential centers maintained by contractor organizations;
- *YouthBuild*, a program that provides grant funding to nonprofit and other organizations to serve youth through job training and education services in the construction trades; and
- *Reentry Employment Opportunities* (REO), a program that provides grant funding to nonprofit and other organizations to serve juvenile and adult offenders through job training and other services.

The Youth Activities program was established under WIA, and retained many of its same features as authorized under WIOA. Job Corps was enacted as part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-452), and was later incorporated into successor workforce laws. YouthBuild was originally authorized under the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-550). The program was administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) until it was transferred to DOL in 2007 under the YouthBuild Transfer Act (P.L. 109-281) and incorporated into WIA and WIOA. WIOA does not explicitly authorize the REO program; however, the annual appropriations law has provided funding under Section 169 of WIOA and the Second Chance Act. Section 169 authorizes evaluations and research.

DOL's Employment and Training Administration administers the four programs. All of the programs offer employment, job training, educational services, and social supports. For example, local workforce development areas must provide specific elements, including mentoring and follow-up, to youth who receive services under the Youth Activities program. These workforce development boards receive funding from state workforce development boards to carry out activities. YouthBuild program participants engage in employment and other activities primarily related to housing and other types of construction work. Job Corps is the only one of the programs that provides residential services; youth can live onsite and receive health care services, child care, and other supports at residential centers.

Further, the programs generally serve vulnerable youth. Participants in the Youth Activities, Job Corps, and YouthBuild programs must be low-income and have a barrier to employment, except out-of-school in the Youth Activities program do not have to be low-income. The youth component of the Reentry Employment Opportunities program serves youth who have become involved in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system or youth at risk of becoming involved.

The programs are funded somewhat differently. DOL allocates funding for the Youth Activities program to state WDBs based on a formula, while Job Corps enters into contracts with nonprofit and for-profit organizations and into an interagency agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service. The other programs competitively award grants to nonprofit and other organizations and local communities. **Table 1** summarizes the programs' major features.

Table 1. Features of Youth Job Training and Workforce Programs Authorized Under WIOA

Key Feature	Youth Activities	Job Corps	YouthBuild	Youth Component of Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)
Purpose	WIOA does not specify purpose areas for the program. However, the law generally seeks to provide eligible youth with assistance in achieving academic and employment success through activities that improve educational and skill competencies and foster effective connections to employers.	To maintain a national Job Corps program—carried out in partnership with states and communities—to assist eligible youth to connect to the labor force by providing them with intensive social, academic, career and technical education, and service learning opportunities, in residential centers throughout the country, to (1) obtain secondary school diplomas or recognized postsecondary credentials leading to successful careers, in in-demand industry sectors or occupations or the Armed Forces or (2) enroll in postsecondary education, including apprenticeship programs; and (3) provide responsible citizenship. The other purpose areas focus on program operations.	To (1) enable disadvantaged youth to obtain the education and employment skills necessary to achieve self-sufficiency in occupations in demand and postsecondary education and training opportunities; (2) provide disadvantaged youth with opportunities for meaningful work and to serve their communities; (3) foster employment and leadership skills and commitment to community development among youth in low-income communities; (4) expand the supply of permanent affordable housing for the homeless by utilizing the energies and talents of disadvantaged youth; and (5) improve the quality and energy efficiency of community and other nonprofit and public facilities, including those facilities that are used to serve homeless and low-income families.	Per WIOA's evaluation and research authority, to support related initiatives that seek to assist youth offenders and youth at risk of dropping out; and provide supports for youth at risk of involvement with the justice system. (Appropriation laws have specified that funding for the program is appropriated under the authority of Section 169 of WIOA and the Second Chance Act. Section 169 authorizes evaluations and research.)

Key Feature	Youth Activities	Job Corps	YouthBuild	Youth Component of Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)
Target Population	*In-school youth* ages 14 to 21 and out-*of-school youth* ages 16 to 24 are eligible. In-school youth includes those who are attending school, low-income, and meet specified criteria, such as being deficient in basic skills, pregnant or parenting, individuals who are English language learners, or homeless or currently or formerly in foster care. Out-of-school youth includes those who meet certain criteria such as being a high school dropout or being low-income. For purposes of eligibility, *low-income* also means youth who are living in a high-poverty area. No less than 75% of funds (for statewide funding and funding for local areas) must be used for out-of-school youth.	Includes youth ages 16 through 24 who are low-income and meet one or more of the following criteria: (1) basic skills deficient; (2) a school dropout; (3) homeless, a runaway, or an individual in foster care or who aged out of foster care (4) a parent; (5) a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons (as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, or TVPA); or (6) an individual who requires additional education, career and technical training, or workforce preparation skills to be able to obtain and retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency to participate in regular schoolwork or to secure and maintain employment. A veteran is eligible if he or she meets the eligibility criteria; however, the income requirement does not apply if the veteran's income earned in the military (within the six-month period prior to applying for the program) exceeds the income limit.	Includes youth ages 16 through 24 who are (1) members of low-income families, in foster care, offenders, disabled, the children of incarcerated parents, or migrants; and (2) are school dropouts.	Per WIOA's evaluation and research authority, the target population has included youth offenders and young adult offenders.

Key Feature	Youth Activities	Job Corps	YouthBuild	Youth Component of Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)
Funding Mechanism	Funds are allocated by formula to state workforce development boards (WDBs), based on a formula that accounts for a state's relative share of unemployment and economically disadvantaged youth. In turn, state boards reallocate, by formula, funding to local WDBs on the same basis that funds are allocated to states. Local WDBs generally contract with local entities, such as nonprofit organizations and community colleges, to provide services.	DOL enters into an agreement with a federal, state, or local agency; an area career and technical education school or residential career and technical education school; or a private organization to operate Job Corps centers. In addition, DOL enters into an interagency agreement with the U.S. Forest Service, under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which operate 23 Civilian Conservation Centers that have a focus on conserving, developing, or managing public natural resources or public recreation areas.	Grants are competitively awarded to community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, entities carrying out activities under Title I of WIOA (such as a local workforce development board), community action agencies, state or local housing development agencies, an Indian tribe or other agency primarily serving Indians, state or local youth service or conservation corps, and other organizations that provide education or employment training under a federal program other than YouthBuild.	Per WIOA's evaluation and research authority, grants are competitively awarded to a variety of entities, which have included community-based organizations, school districts, and state departments of corrections.
Types of Activities for Youth	Each local WDB must provide 14 elements that include tutoring, study skills training, and other academic activities; alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services; paid and unpaid work experiences (which may include summer employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities); supportive services; adult mentoring; follow-up services, and other activities.	Youth generally live at the Job Corps centers, where youth receive intensive social and academic supports and career and technical education; and participate in service-learning opportunities.	At least 40% of the time, youth must participate in certain work and skill development activities. At least an additional 50% of the time, participants must be engaged in education and related services and activities designed to meet their educational needs. These activities include training and supports in the construction trades and (if approved by the Secretary) in additional in-demand industry sectors or occupations.	Per WIOA's pilot and demonstration authority, grantees provided a variety of activities, depending on the type of grant awarded. Such activities included pre-release, mentoring, housing, case management, employment services, and violence prevention strategies.

Key Feature	Youth Activities	Job Corps	YouthBuild	Youth Component of Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)
Participants in the Program	160,486 (2019)	46,966 (PY2018)	6,000 annually	10,342 (FY2019)
Authorized Funding	Specified funding levels that increase over FY2015-FY2020 from $820 million to $964 million annually.	Specified funding levels that increase over FY2015-FY2020 from $1.69 billion to $1.98 billion annually.	Specified funding levels that increase over FY2015-FY2020 from $76 million to $91 million annually.	Funding authority for Section 169 (evaluations and research) increases over FY2015-FY2020 from $91 million to $106.9 million annually.
FY2020 Funding (dollars in thousands)	$913,130	$1,743,655	$94,534	$26,597 (out of $98,079 overall appropriation)

Sources: Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on correspondence with DOL, ETA, most recently in August 2020; Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA; P.L. 113-128); DOL, *FY2020 Budget Operating Plan*; DOL, ETA, *Student Outcomes/Who Job Corps Serves;* DOL, ETA, *YouthBuild Fact Sheet;* DOL, ETA, *Workforce System Results for the Quarter Ending December 31, 2019,* p. 2.

Notes: WIOA requires that funds appropriated for a program or activity carried out under Title I of the act are available for obligation only on the basis of a program year (PY). The program year begins on July 1 in the fiscal year for which the appropriation is made and ends June 30 of the following year. Generally, the appropriations for a given fiscal year (e.g., FY2020) are used to fund the program in the same program year (e.g., PY2020).

Coordination

The WIOA Youth Activities program and other youth programs make up a network of job training and employment opportunities for youth. In some communities, this may be formalized while in others, coordination between the programs may be less structured. WIOA includes provisions that encourage or require the programs to coordinate with one another. The state workforce development board (WDB), which receives Youth Activities and other funding from DOL, may include representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.[15] These boards are responsible for carrying out WIOA programs at the state level and allocating funds to local WDBs. The local board is made up of partners that collaborate to provide coordinated employment and training services in the community.[16]

Further, under the state workforce plan (unified state plan), states are required to submit a description of the state's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce—including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment—and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, among other requirements.[17] In addition, local WDBs, which receive funds to carry out the Youth Activities program, must describe and assess in their local plans the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth with disabilities. The plan must identify successful models of such youth workforce investment activities.[18] Local workforce boards may choose to establish a standing committee to provide information and assist with planning to provide services to youth.[19] Further, the Youth Activities program, Job Corps, and YouthBuild are required partners at one-stop centers. One-stop centers are operated by local WDBs and include federal programs that coordinate employment and other services in a community for all youth and adults.[20]

Funding

WIOA provides funding authorization from FY2015 through FY2020 for youth employment and job training programs. Generally, funds appropriated for a program or activity carried out under Title I of the act are available for obligation on the basis of a program year.[21] The program year begins on July 1 in the fiscal year for which the appropriation is made and ends June 30 of the following year. Funds for the Youth Activities program may first become available for a new program year in the preceding April. In addition, Congress has tended to specify that funds appropriated for YouthBuild and the youth component of the Reentry Employment Opportunities program are available for obligation beginning in the April preceding a given program year. Congress has generally required that obligated funds for Job Corps are made available for one

[15] Section 101(b)(1)(II) of WIOA.

[16] Section 121 of WIOA.

[17] Section 102(b)(1)(D) of WIOA.

[18] Section 108(b)(9) of WIOA.

[19] Section 107(b)(4)(ii) of WIOA.

[20] Section 121(b)(1)(B) of WIOA. For further information, see CRS Report R44252, *The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the One-Stop Delivery System*.

[21] Section 189(g)(1)(A) of WIOA. Section 173(h)(2), which pertains to authorization for YouthBuild, states that notwithstanding Section 189(g), appropriations for any fiscal year for programs and activities carried out under this section are to be available for obligation only on the basis of a fiscal year.

program year, although funding for certain purposes can be obligated through later dates. Funds obligated for any program year for the Youth Activities may be expended by each state receiving such funds during that program year and the two succeeding program years. Local areas may expend funds received from the state during the program year and the succeeding program year.[22]

Funding for FY2000-FY2020

Table 2 includes the level of enacted funding[23] for each of the youth job training and employment programs for FY2000 through FY2020. (Appropriations for these years correspond to the same program year). Congress appropriated a total of $2.4 billion to $2.8 billion annually for the four programs in most years over this period.

Table A-1 presents Youth Activities funding allocated to the states and outlying areas, which are provided by DOL on a program-year basis. Additional appropriations have not be provided to the programs in response to COVID-19.

Job Corps has generally received the largest appropriation each year, followed by the Youth Activities program, YouthBuild, and the youth component of the Reentry Employment Opportunity program (although in two years, YouthBuild received less funding than the REO youth component).

Table 2. Enacted Funding for WIOA Youth Job Training and Employment Programs, FY2000-FY2020 and Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, P.L. 111-5)

Dollars in thousands; the fiscal year generally corresponds to the program year for each program

Fiscal Year	Youth Activities	Job Corps	YouthBuild	Youth Component of the Reentry Employment Opportunities Program	Total Funding, All Programs
2000	$1,000,965	$1,357,776	$43,000	$13,907	*$2,415,648*
2001	1,127,965	1,399,148	60,000	55,000	*2,642,113*
2002	1,127,965	1,458,732	65,000	55,000	*2,706,697*
2003	994,459	1,509,094	59,610	54,643	*2,617,806*
2004	995,059	1,541,151	65,000	49,705	*2,650,915*
2005	986,288	1,551,861	62,000	69,440	*2,669,589*
2006	940,500	1,564,180	62,000	49,104	*2,615,784*
2007	940,500	1,566,178	49,500	49,104	*2,605,282*
2008	924,069	1,610,506	58,952	55,000	*2,648,527*
2009	924,069	1,683,938	70,000	88,500	*2,766,507*
ARRA	1,200,000	250,000	50,000	0	*1,500,000*
2010	924,069	1,708,205	102,500	73,493	*2,808,267*
2011[a]	825,914	1,706,171a	79,840	50,000	*2,661,925*

[22] Section 189(g)(2) of WIOA.

[23] All funding numbers are in nominal (not inflation-adjusted) dollars.

Fiscal Year	Youth Activities	Job Corps	YouthBuild	Youth Component of the Reentry Employment Opportunities Program	Total Funding, All Programs
2012[b]	824,353	1,702,947	79,689	60,000	*2,666,989*
2013[c]	781,375	1,613,872	75,534	43,910	*2,514,691*
2014	820,430	1,688,155	77,534	42,500	*2,628,619*
2015	831,842	1,688,155	79,689	44,054	*2,643,740*
2016[d]	873,416	1,656,825	84,534	39,520	*2,654,295*
2017	873,416	1,704,155	84,534	48,092	*2,710,197*
2018	903,416	1,718,655	89,534	45,000	*2,756,605*
2019	903,416	1,718,655	89,534	49,592	*2,756,605*
2020	913,416	1,743,655	94,534	26,597	*2,778,802*

Source: Compiled by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) from correspondence with the Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA), most recently in August 2020; DOL budget justifications; Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) budget justifications; DOL Employment and Training Administration budget information at http://www.doleta.gov/budget; DOL, *All Purpose Table FY2011 Full-Year Continuing Resolution*; U.S. Congress, Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 2055, *Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012* Division F, 112th Cong., 1st sess., December 15, 2011, H.Rept. 112-331; DOL, *FY2013 Operating Plan*; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Rules, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., Committee Print 113-32 to the Senate Amendment to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (H.R. 3547), which was enacted as P.L. 113-76; the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141); Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019; and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245); and Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94).

a. The Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10) includes a 0.2% across-the-board rescission. Job Corps includes three accounts—administration, operations, and construction. The FY2011 appropriations law was based on funding for FY2010, and included an across-the-board rescission of 0.2% for all programs and an additional rescission of $75.0 million. The 0.2% across-the-board rescission applied only to current year, and not advance, appropriations. Advance appropriations are those funds enacted in one fiscal year but not available for obligation until a subsequent fiscal year or years. Two of Job Corps' three accounts, operations and construction, include advance funds. Therefore, the across-the-board reduction only applied to current year funding (or $983.0 million for operations and $5.0 million for construction). According to the Department of Labor, $75.0 million was subtracted from existing balances, and therefore the FY2011 funding was not affected by this decrease. CRS correspondence with DOL, ETA, May 2010.

b. FY2012 funding information was included in the conference report (H.Rept. 112-331) for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY2012 (P.L. 112-74). This law was the final in a series of continuing resolutions to provide funding for the Department of Labor and select other departments. The figures presented in this table incorporate an across-the-board rescission of 0.189%.

c. Funding for FY2013 was provided through a series of continuing resolutions. The final continuing resolution was the Consolidated and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6). The FY2013 funding levels provided were based on the operating plan provided by DOL to Congress. This funding included a 0.2% rescission, per P.L. 113-6, and a sequestered amount of 5.0%, per the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25), as amended by the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-240).

d. Following three continuing resolutions (P.L. 114-53, P.L. 114-96, and P.L. 114-100), Congress passed, and President Obama enacted, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113) to fund the Department of Labor and other agencies.

The next section of the report provides further discussion about the youth programs authorized under WIOA.

WIOA Youth Activities Program[24]

Overview and Purpose

The Youth Activities program is one of three formula grant programs that were initially authorized by WIA, and is now authorized under WIOA as the Youth Workforce Investment Activities program. The other two WIOA programs target adults (Adult Activities) and dislocated workers (Dislocated Worker Activities), although youth ages 18 or older are eligible for services provided through the Adult Activities program. These programs provide core funding for a coordinated system of employment and training services overseen by a state workforce development board and the governor, and composed of representatives of businesses and other partners. WIOA does not include purpose areas for the Youth Activities program; however, it generally seeks to provide assistance to youth in achieving academic and employment success.

Program Structure

With assistance from the state workforce development board, the governor develops a plan (known as the unified state plan) that is submitted to DOL. The plan is to address several items related to employment and training needs, performance accountability, and employment and training activities. The plan is to be submitted every four years for the Youth Activities, Adult Activities, and Dislocated Activities programs.[25] Further, the unified state plan is to address youth primarily in two places. It must outline the state's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, include preparing youth with barriers to employment. It must also outline the criteria to be used by local boards in awarding contracts for youth services and describing how local WDBs will take into consideration the ability of providers to meet performance measures that are based on primary indicators of performance for the Youth Activities program (these indicators are discussed in a subsequent section).

As specified under WIOA, a local workforce area is overseen by the local workforce development board. Membership of the local board is to include representatives of businesses, local education entities, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and economic development agencies, among others.[26] The boards may include representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.[27]

Local boards are to competitively award funds to local organizations and other entities to provide employment and job training services to youth.[28] Grants or contracts awarded are to be based on criteria in the state plan, and by taking into consideration the ability of the providers to meet

[24] Title I, Chapter 2 of WIOA and 20 C.F.R. 20 C.F.R. §681.

[25] Section 102 and Section 103 of WIOA.

[26] Section 107(b) of WIOA.

[27] Section 107(2)(iv) of WIOA.

[28] Section 123(b) of WIOA. The regulations (20 C.F.R. §681.400) specify that local workforce development boards may choose to directly provide some or all youth workforce activities.

performance accountability measures that are based on primary indicators of performance for the Youth Activities program (as discussed subsequently). Further, a local board may award funding on a sole-source basis if the board determines there is an insufficient number of eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities in the local area to participate on a competitive basis. Local boards may terminate "for cause" the eligibility of these providers.[29]

The local board develops a local plan that discusses items similar to those in the state plan, except that the plan describes the local area's one-stop delivery system. A one-stop system is intended to provide central access to employment and training services in a community. The Youth Activities program is a required partner in the one-stop system under WIOA. The WIOA regulations specify that local boards must either collocate youth program staff at one-stop centers and/or ensure one-stop centers and staff are equipped to advise youth in order to increase youth access to services and connect youth to the program that best aligns with their needs.[30] Further, one-stop systems may have specialized centers to address special needs, including the needs of youth.

The local board must ensure that parents and other stakeholders are involved in designing and implementing the Youth Activities program.[31] In addition, the local board may establish a standing committee to provide information and to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to providing services to youth, including community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth.[32] If a local board establishes a standing youth committee, it may assign it the responsibility of selecting youth providers. The WIOA regulations discuss the potential role of a standing youth committee, including to recommend policy direction to the local board for the design and development of programs to benefit all youth; the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system to ensure a full range of services and responsibilities for all youth, including disconnected youth; and ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth, among other possible responsibilities.[33]

Allocations

Funding for the Youth Activities program is allocated from DOL to states, including Puerto Rico and Washington, DC, and the outlying areas.[34] WIOA requires that not more than 0.25% is reserved for outlying areas and not more than 1.5% is reserved for youth activities for Native American youth.[35] WIOA specifies that the allotments for the outlying areas are based on a competitive grant process.[36]

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[29] Section 107(d)(10(B) and Section 123 of WIOA.

[30] 20 C.F.R. §681.700.

[31] Section 129(c)(3)(C) of WIOA.

[32] Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii) of WIOA.

[33] 20 C.F.R. §681.100.

[34] The outlying areas comprise the U. S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. WIOA specifies that the Republic of Palau may not apply for funding during any period during which DOL and the Department of Education (ED) determine that a Compact of Free Association (COFA) is in effect and contains provisions for training and education assistance that prohibit the assistance provided under WIOA. COFA defines the relationship that Palau has entered into as an associated state agreement with the United States. No such determination prohibiting assistance to Palau has been made, and Palau remains eligible for WIOA Title I funding.

[35] Section 127(1) of WIOA.

[36] Section 127(b)(1)(B)(ii) of WIOA. In practice, funds for outlying areas are based on a formula determined by the Secretary that was used under WIA. See, for example, DOL, ETA, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL)

The remainder of the funds are allocated to states by a formula. The formula is based (1) one-third on the relative number of unemployed individuals residing in areas of substantial unemployment (an average unemployment rate of at least 6.5% for the most recent 12 months); (2) one-third on the relative "excess" number of unemployed individuals (an unemployment rate of at least 4.5%); and (3) one-third on the relative number of disadvantaged youth (individuals 16 through 21 who receive an income that, in relation to family size, does not exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level).[37] WIOA specifies that states are to receive, at minimum, the higher of 90% of their relative share of the prior year's funding or, at maximum, 130% of their relative share of the prior year's funding.[38]

Of the funds allocated to states for the Youth Activities program (as well as for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs), not more than 15% can be reserved for statewide activities (only 5% of reserved funds may be used for administrative activities, per WIOA).[39] States must use these funds for certain specified activities, and may use the funds for other specified activities. For example, WIOA requires states to use the statewide funds to carry out monitoring and oversight activities of the Youth Activities program (and Adult and Dislocated Worker programs), which may include a review comparing the services provided to male and female youth.[40]

The balance of funding that goes to states is allocated to local workforce development areas on the same basis that Youth Activities funds are allocated to states, to take into account the relative numbers of unemployed individuals and low-income youth in the area compared to other local areas of the state. In addition, the law includes provisions for minimum (90% of the average allocation for the preceding two years) and maximum (130% of the average allocation for the preceding two years) funding that goes to local areas.[41] Local areas may reserve no more than 10% of funds allotted under the program for administrative costs.

Elements of Local Programs

Job training and employment programs that are funded under WIOA and carried out by local WDBs are responsible for providing direct services to youth participants. The programs must be designed to include an objective assessment of the youth's skills.[42] Further, the programs must develop service strategies for youth that are directly linked to one or more of the indicators of performance for the program and that identify career pathways with both education and employment goals.

Table 3 shows the 14 elements, or services, that each local program must provide for youth. The table is organized based on whether the elements are targeted for educational achievement, employment services, linkages between educational achievement and employment services, leadership development activities, additional support for youth services, and other activities. Local boards must provide each youth with information on the full array of applicable or appropriate services available through the local board, other eligible providers, or one-stop

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[37] The word *relative* means the number of individuals in a state compared to the total number in all states.

[38] WIOA provides small state minimums such that no state receives less than the total of three-tenths of 1% of $1 billion that is allocated to states, or two-thirds of 1% of the excess if the allocation exceeds $1 billion.

[39] Section 128(a) of WIOA.

[40] Section 129(b) of WIOA.

[41] Section 128(b) of WIOA.

[42] Section 129(c) of WIOA.

partners, and they must also refer youth to appropriate training and educational programs, among other activities.[43] In addition, at least 20% of the funds allocated to the local area must be used to provide youth (whether they are in school or not) with paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component.[44]

Although local boards have to make all program elements available to youth, each individual youth does not need to participate in all elements. Further, a local program that receives Youth Activities funding is not required to provide all program elements with WIOA funds; however, these other activities must then be provided by a partner organization and closely coordinated with the local program. The program must have an agreement in place if it partners with another organization to ensure that a program element will be offered by that organization. In practice, this means that youth program case managers must contact and monitor the other provider to ensure the activity is of high quality and beneficial to the youth participant.[45]

Table 3. Elements of Youth Activities Program

Educational achievement
• Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.
• Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
• Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
Employment services
• Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include (1) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities throughout the school year; (2) pre-apprenticeship programs; (3) internships and job shadowing; and (4) on-the-job skills training.
• Occupational skills training, which may include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria for eligible youth providers.
• Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.
Linkages between educational achievement and employment services
• Education offered concurrently within and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

[43] Section 129(c)(3) of WIOA.

[44] Section 129(c)(3)(4) of WIOA. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) surveyed a random sample of workforce leaders from 106 local workforce development areas about the extent to which local areas are addressing this spending requirement. About 40% of leaders responded that meeting the spending requirement was a slight challenge or no challenge; about 32% reported that it was a moderate challenge; and about 20% reported that it was very challenging or an extreme challenge. Local areas reported expanding work-experienced opportunities for youth primarily through temporary paid employment. Further, they reported challenges with lack of job readiness among youth and employers' reluctance to hire WIOA participants. In response to these challenges, local areas reported providing job-readiness training for youth and strengthening partnerships with employers. See GAO, *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: States and Local Areas Report Progress in Measuring Youth Program Requirements*, GAO-18-475, June 2018.

[45] 20 C.F.R. §681.470.

Leadership development activities
• Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities concerning responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.
Additional support for youth services
• Supportive services.
• Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.
• Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.
Other
• Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.
• Financial literacy education.
• Entrepreneurial skills training.

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on Section 129(c)(2) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA; P.L. 113-128).

Notes: The following terms are defined in regulation: *pre apprenticeship program*, *adult mentoring*, *financial literacy education*, *comprehensive guidance and counseling*, *leadership development opportunities*, *positive civic and social behaviors*, and *occupational skills training*. See 20 C.F.R. §681.480 through 20 C.F.R. §681.540.

Participants

As shown in **Table 4**, WIOA specifies that youth are eligible for the Youth Activities program if they are ages 14 through 24. In addition, local workforce development areas (and states) must use no less than 75% of funds for serving out-of-school youth.[46] A local workforce development area (or state) may adjust the share of out-of-school youth to 50% if the state determines it will be unable to use a certain share of funding to serve these youth.[47] WIOA requires in-school youth generally and two groups of out-of-school youth to be low-income, and enables up to 5% of these youth to not meet the income criteria.[48] No more than 5% of the in-school youth in a local area may be eligible because they require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. Youth ages 18 through 21 may enroll in the Youth Activities program or Adult Activities program, or may co-enroll in both programs.[49]

[46] In its survey of local workforce development leaders, GAO found that most states reported they were on target in PY2015 and PY2016 with meeting the 75% out-of-school spending requirement. Local areas reported having taken steps to address challenges locating, retaining, and serving out-of-school youth. Such strategies included increasing their recruitment efforts and strengthening partnerships with other WIOA programs, state and local government agencies, and community-based organizations. See GAO, *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: States and Local Areas Report Progress in Measuring Youth Program Requirements*, GAO-18-475, June 2018.

[47] A local area is exempt if it is in a state that (1) receives 90% of the allotment percentage for the preceding fiscal year for the Youth Activities program (per Section 127(b)(1)(C)(iv)(I)) or Adult program (Section 132(b)(1)(B)(iv)(I)); or (2) receives the small state minimum allotment under the Youth Activities program (per Section 127(b)(1)(C)(iv)(II)) or Adult program (per Section 132(b)(1)(B)(iv)(II). A local area that meets one of these two criteria would be able to decrease the funds used for out-of-school youth to 50% of their allotment (that is used for non-administrative costs) only if the state (1) determines that the local area will be unable to use at least 75% of the funds available due to a low number of out-of-school youth; (2) submits to the Secretary of DOL, on behalf of the local area, a request including a proposed percentage decrease (not less than 50%), and (3) a summary of the analysis about the determination. This request has to be approved by the Secretary.

[48] Section 129(a)(4) of WIOA.

[49] 20 C.F.R. §681.430.

Table 4. Eligibility for Youth Activities Program

Age	
A youth is eligible for the Youth Activities program if he or she is age 14 through 24. Eligibility by age varies depending on whether the youth is in school or out-of-school.	
Other criteria	
In school youth is a youth attending school (as defined by state law) who is age 14 through 21 (or older age if the individual has a disability and is attending school per state law); low-income; and one or more of the following: • basic skills deficient;[a] • a homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a current or former foster child eligible for independent living services or in an out-of-home placement; • pregnant or parenting; • an offender; • an English language learner; • an individual with a disability; or • who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.	*Out-of-school youth* is a youth not attending any school (as defined by state law), age 16 through 24, and one or more of the following: • a school dropout; • within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent completed school year calendar quarter; • a homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a current or former foster child eligible for independent living services or in an out-of-home placement; • pregnant or parenting; • an individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system; • an individual with a disability; • a low-income recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and who is basic skills deficient or an English language learner; or • a low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.
Exceptions based on income	
As noted above, most of the eligibility categories do not specify a certain level of income. Up to 5% of in-school youth can participate if they are not low-income. In addition, up to 5% of out-of-school youth participants can participate if they are not low-income and qualify under one of these two categories: (1) recipients of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and who are basic skills deficient, or English language learners, or (2) individuals who require additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.	
Restrictions	
No less than 75% of the Youth Activities program funds for statewide activities and local activities must be used to provide youth workforce investment activities for out-of-school youth. Up to 5% of the in-school youth in a local area may be eligible because they require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.	

Source: Section 129(a) of WIOA.

Notes: For purposes of eligibility, *low-income* means youth living in a high-poverty area or the youth receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch under the Richard R. Russell National School Lunch Act (Section 3(36) of WIOA). Eligibility for an individual with a disability is based on his or her own income rather than his or her family's income, so long as the personal income meets the definition of low-income (Section 3(36)(A)(vi) of WIOA). A high-poverty area is a Census tract, set of contiguous Census tracts, Indian reservation, tribal land, or Native Alaskan Village or county that has a poverty rate of at least 30% as set every five years in the American Community Survey 5-Year data (20 C.F.R. §681.260).

a. *Basic skills deficient* means the individual (1) has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or (2) is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society (Section 3(5) of WIOA).

Performance

WIOA established six primary indicators of performance for the Youth Activities program that superseded the WIA performance measures. These six primary indicators apply to all youth, regardless of age, and went into effect at the beginning of PY2016:[50]

- percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent,[51] during participation in or within one year after exit from the program;
- percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and
- indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.[52]

States are required to reach an agreement with DOL, in conjunction with the Department of Education (ED), about the levels of performance for each state. These levels of performance must be based on specified factors, including how the levels compare with other states' adjusted levels of performance. Further, states must ensure the levels are adjusted using an objective statistical model established by DOL.[53] Performance data are reported both by state and nationally.[54]

The following sections of the report discuss, in less detail, the three other workforce and job training for youth authorized under WIOA.

[50] Section 116(A) of WIOA. See also, DOL, ETA, *Performance Accountability Guidance for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I, Title II, Title II and Title IV Core Programs*, TEGL 10-16, December 19, 2016.

[51] Program participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent are to be included in the percentage counted if, in addition to obtaining such diploma or its recognized equivalent, they have obtained or retained employment or are in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

[52] The law specifies that DOL and the Department of Education are to jointly develop and establish one or more indicators of performance that indicate the effectiveness of the Youth Activities program (and Adult and Dislocated Worker programs) in serving employers.

[53] Section 116(b(3)(v) of WIOA.

[54] DOL, ETA, "WIOA Performance Results," https://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/eta_default.cfm#wiastann.

Job Corps[55]

Overview and Purpose

The Job Corps program is carried out by the Office of Job Corps within DOL's Employment and Training Administration, and consists of residential centers throughout the country. The purpose of the program is to provide disadvantaged youth with the skills needed to—obtain secondary school diplomas or recognized postsecondary credentials leading to successful careers in in-demand industry sectors or occupations or the Armed Forces; or enroll in postsecondary education, including apprenticeship programs.[56]

Program Structure

Currently, 121 Job Corps centers are in operation, and there is at least one center in every state and Puerto Rico.[57] Of these 121 centers, 23 are known as Civilian Conservation Centers, which are operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, through an interagency agreement with DOL. Civilian Conservation Centers focus on conserving, developing, or managing public natural resources or public recreational areas.

Most Job Corps centers are located on property that is owned or leased long-term by the federal government. Job Corps campuses include dormitories, classrooms, workshops for various trades, health centers, a cafeteria, a career services building, and administrative buildings. In addition to WIOA and its regulation, centers are to follow detailed guidelines about various aspects of the program in the Policy and Requirements Handbook.[58]

As specified under WIOA, Job Corps centers may be operated by a federal, state, or local agency; an area career and technical education school, or residential vocational school; or a private organization, such as a for-profit business or nonprofit organization. Authorization for new Job Corps centers is contained in appropriations law. DOL initiates a competitive process seeking applicants that are selected based on their ability to coordinate activities in the workforce system for youth; ability to offer career and technical training opportunities that reflect local employment opportunities; relationships with the surrounding communities, employers, and other stakeholders; and (where applicable) past performance. Additionally, under WIOA, an entity applying to operate a center must submit to DOL certain information, such as how employment, education, and other opportunities offered at the center will reflect state and local employment opportunities and a description of the entity's strong fiscal controls in place, among other

[55] Title I, Chapter 4, Subtitle C of WIOA and 20 C.F.R. §670.

[56] Section 141 of WIOA. For further information on the program, see Jillian Berk et al., *The External Review of Job Corps: An Evidence Scan Report*, Mathematica Policy Research, March 2018. (Hereinafter, Jillian Berk et al., *The External Review of Job Corps: An Evidence Scan Report*.)

[57] In recent years, DOL has closed selected Job Corps centers. In 2019, DOL entered into a grant agreement with the Idaho Department of Labor to operate the Centennial CCC in Idaho and repurposed the Carville Job Corps Center as a DOL Youth ChalleNGe site in partnership with the Louisiana National Guard. See *FY 2021 Congressional Budget Justification Job Corps*, p. JC-17. In addition, DOL closed the Homestead Job Corps Center in Florida in 2015 due primarily to safety concerns, and closed four other centers due to low performance: Treasure Lake Civilian Conservation Center in Oklahoma in 2014, Ouachita CCC in Arkansas in 2016, Golconda CCC in Illinois in 2018, and Kicking Horse Job Corps Center in 2019.

[58] DOL, ETA, Office of Job Corps, *Policy and Requirements Handbook*. (Hereinafter, DOL, ETA, Office of Job Corps, *Policy and Requirements Handbook*.)

information. WIOA specifies the contract may be for up to a two-year period with up to three one-year renewal periods.[59]

Services for Students

While at a Job Corps center, students receive the following services:

- education programs, including English language acquisition programs;
- career and technical education, work experience, and work-based learning; and
- recreational activities, physical rehabilitation and development, driver's education, and counseling, which may include information about financial literacy.

Youth also receive personal allowances while in the program and transition allowances as they are leaving the program. WIOA specifies that these transition allowances are to be incentive-based to reflect the graduate's completion of academic, career and technical education or training, and attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.[60]

Students tend to experience the program in four stages.[61] First, students learn about the program and center through orientation sessions and other outreach efforts conducted by the center and its contractor for outreach and admissions. Second, students who decide they want to pursue the program and are selected to continue on in with career preparation activities in the first few weeks of enrolling in the program. Third, students who continue on focus on career development activities. During this period, students learn and demonstrate career technical, academic, and employability skills. Training focuses on academic subject matters and how they are applied to specific trades or occupations. Students who did not graduate from high school can pursue a high school diploma or GED. Finally, students participate in a period of career transition. During this period, they receive placement services that focus on transitioning them in full-time jobs that are related to their career and technical training and pay wages that allow them to be self-sufficient, or placing them in higher education or advanced training programs, including apprenticeship programs.

For one year after exiting the program, Job Corps must provide graduates with services that include transition support and workplace counseling. Some graduates may go on to participate in an advanced career training program. These students continue to remain in the program for another year while obtaining additional training and education, such as an Associate's Degree.[62]

DOL contracts with entities—known as outreach and admissions (OA) contractors (though not referred to in the law as such)—to recruit students to the program. OA contractors seek out potential applicants, conduct interviews with applicants to identify their needs and eligibility status, and identify youth who are interested and likely Job Corps participants. Similarly, DOL contracts with career transition services (CTS) providers—organizations that enter into a contract or other agreement with Job Corps—to provide career and education placement services for

[59] Section 147(a) of WIOA.

[60] Section 150 of WIOA.

[61] DOL, ETA, Office of Job Corps, *Policy and Requirements Handbook*: and GAO, *Job Corps Better Targeted Career Training and Improved Preenrollment Information Could Enhance Female Residential Student Recruitment and Retention*, GAO-09-470, June 2009.

[62] Section 148(c) of WIOA.

graduates and, to the extent possible, former students. OA and CTS providers work closely with Job Corps centers, and in some cases are operated by the same entities.

Community Engagement

Each Job Corps center director must establish relationships with employers, applicable one-stop centers and local boards, entities carrying out relevant apprenticeship programs and youth programs, and other stakeholders.[63] Each center must establish a workforce council, made up of private sector employers who must have substantial management and other responsibilities and represent businesses with employment opportunities for youth in the program; representatives of labor organizations (where present) and representatives of employees; and Job Corps students and graduates.[64] A majority of the members must be employers. The council must work with local workforce development boards and review local market information to provide recommendations about the center's education and training offerings.

Allocations

DOL enters into contracts with nonprofit and for-profit organizations to operate the centers. Contracts are competitively awarded to organizations based on ranked scores, in conjunction with other factors. The contract period is two years, with three one-year-option renewals. DOL transfers funding for Civilian Conservation Centers to the USDA under an interagency agreement.

Participants

Job Corps participants must be ages 16 through 24,[65] low-income, and be one or more of the following: (1) basic skills deficient; (2) a school dropout; (3) homeless, a runaway, or a foster child (including an individual who was in foster care and has aged out of foster care); (4) a parent; (5) victims of a severe form of trafficking, as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act; or (6) an individual in need of additional education, vocational training, or intensive counseling and related assistance in order to participate in regular schoolwork or to secure and maintain employment. A veteran is eligible if he or she meets the eligibility criteria; however, the income requirement does not apply if the veteran's income earned in the military (within the six-month period prior to applying for the program) exceeds the income limit.[66]

Job Corps centers take additional factors into consideration when selecting participants, such as whether the program can best meet their educational and vocational needs and whether the youth can engage successfully in group situations and settings. The applicant must also pass a background check that is conducted in accordance with applicable state and local laws.[67] WIOA prohibits an individual from being denied a position in the Job Corps program solely on the basis of his or her contact with the criminal justice system, except that an individual can be denied a position if he or she has been convicted of a felony consisting of murder (as described in Title 18

[63] Section 153 of WIOA.

[64] Section 154(c) of WIOA.

[65] No more than 20% of participants may be ages 22 through 24 on the date of enrollment. The age limit may be waived by DOL, in accordance with DOL regulations, for individuals with a disability.

[66] Section 145 of WIOA.

[67] Section 145(a) of WIOA.

of the U.S. Code), child abuse, or a crime involving rape or sexual assault.[68] Each Job Corps center must develop standards for student conduct and implement what is known as a zero tolerance policy for offenses related to violence and drug and alcohol use, and selected other behaviors. Students are dismissed from the program if they violate this policy.

WIOA requires that students be assigned to the center that offers the type of career and technical education and training that he or she selects (unless the parent or the guardian of an enrollee under 18 objects). Among the centers that offer such education and training, the enrollee is to be assigned to the one closest to his or her home.[69] No more than 20% of participants may live off the grounds of the Job Corps center.[70]

WIOA specified that no individual may be enrolled in Job Corps for more than two years, except (1) when completing an advance training program that would require the individual to participate for more than an additional year (as permitted for such a program); (2) an individual with a disability who would reasonably be expected to graduate, if allowed to participate for up to an additional year; and (3) in the case of an individual who participates in national service (as encouraged at Civilian Conservation Centers) who may extend enrollment to equal the period of such national service.[71]

Performance

WIOA directs DOL to establish expected levels of performance for the program and individual centers that relate to each of the six primary indicators of performance for the Youth Workforce Activities program. These indicators include (1) entry into education, training, or unsubsidized employment (during both the (a) second quarter and (b) fourth quarter after exiting the program); (2) median earnings; (3) obtaining a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma or its equivalent; (4) participation in an education or training program that leads to a credential or employment; and (5) program effectiveness in serving employers.[72]

WIOA further specifies performance measures for recruiters (outreach and admissions) and CTS contractors. The OA performance measures pertain to recruitment and performance of students, as well as some of the same information that is to be included in a DOL report to Congress.[73] This report must include information on the performance of each center, the program overall, and the OA and CTS contractors; demographic information on enrollees; the number of graduates who entered the Armed Forces, apprenticeships, unsubsidized employment, and postsecondary education; average wage of graduates; total cost per enrollee and graduate; information regarding the state of Job Corps facilities and buildings; and information regarding the national and community service activities of students, particularly those enrolled at Civilian Conservation Centers, among other information.[74]

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[68] Section 145(b) of WIOA.

[69] Section 145(d) of WIOA.

[70] Section 147(b) of WIOA. Four satellite centers operate as non-residential centers: Brooklyn (NY) is associated with the South Bronx Job Corps center; IndyPendence (IL) is associated with the Atterbury Job Corps center; Kansas City (MO) is associated with Excelsior Springs Job Corps center; PIVOT (OR) is associated with the Springdale Job Corps center.

[71] Section 146 of WIOA.

[72] Section 159(c)(1) of WIOA.

[73] Section 159(c)(2) and Section 159(c)(3) of WIOA.

[74] Section 159(d) of WIOA.

DOL reports on performance of center operators, OA providers, and CTS providers through what are known as report cards. These report cards include some of the performance measures in WIOA, and data are reported on a monthly and annual basis. DOL has shifted toward measures that more closely align with the performance measures in WIOA.[75]

Performance Oversight

WIOA designates centers as high-performing based on their relative ranking and performance under the primary indicators of performance for youth. It also enables the operator of a high-performing center to compete in any competitive selection process carried out for an award to operate such center.[76]

WIOA specifies that a Job Corps center operator failing to meet expected performance levels can be placed under a performance improvement plan (PIP). PIPs are documented plans that outline deficiencies in program performance, corrective actions, and targets for improvement. The plan is to encompass certain actions taken by DOL during a one-year period, including providing technical assistance to the centers; changing the career and technical training offered at the center; changing the management staff of the center; replacing the operator of the center; reducing the capacity of the center; relocating the center; or closing the center. WIOA also enables DOL to establish additional PIPs when a Job Corps center fails to meet performance requirements. These discretionary PIPs have to include the actions described above.[77]

Renewing Contracts and Closing Centers

WIOA provides that DOL *may not* renew the agreement with a center operator, if in the most recent two preceding years for which data are available, the center is ranked in the lowest 10% of centers and fails to achieve an average of 50% or higher in the expected levels of performance under each of the primary indicators of performance for eligible youth in the program.[78] The law allows DOL to renew an agreement with these centers (for up to two years and if in the best interest of the program) under certain circumstances (e.g., performance is due to circumstances beyond the operator's control), and specifies standards that all centers must meet for agreements to be renewed (e.g., satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics). DOL must inform Congress of such renewals. WIOA specifies that DOL *must* select another entity to operate a Civilian Conservation Center if it fails to meet the expected levels of performance relating to the primary indicators of performance or fails to improve performance after three program years.[79]

Prior to the closure of any Job Corps center, DOL must ensure (1) that the proposed decision to close the center is announced in advance to the general public through publication in the *Federal Register* or other appropriate means; (2) that a reasonable comment period, not to exceed 30 days, is established for interested individuals to submit written comments to the Secretary; and (3) that

[75] DOL, ETA, Office of Job Corps, "Job Corps Reports: Performance, Planning, and Recruitment," https://www.jobcorps.gov/job-corps-reports; and DOL, ETA, Office of Job Corps, *Policy and Requirements Handbook*, Chapter 5, Appendix 501. See also, Jillian Berk et al., *The External Review of Job Corps: An Evidence Scan Report*, pp. 9-10.

[76] Section 147(b) of WIOA. For example, some contracts may be set aside for solely small businesses to compete. For further information, see archived CRS Report R43611, *Recent Developments in the Job Corps Program: Frequently Asked Questions*.

[77] Section 159(f) of WIOA.

[78] Section 147(g) of WIOA.

[79] Section 147(g)(4) of WIOA.

the Member of Congress who represents the district in which a center is located is notified within a reasonable period of time in advance of any final decision to close the center.

Finally, WIOA directs DOL to provide for a third-party evaluation of the program every five years, and to submit the results to Congress. The evaluation must address the general effectiveness of the program in relation to its costs; the effectiveness of the performance measures for the program; the effectiveness of the structure and mechanisms for delivering services; the impact of the program on the community, businesses, and participants involved; the extent to which the program and activities meet the needs of various demographic groups; and other such factors that may be appropriate.[80]

DOL has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, a social policy research organization, to document what is known about Job Corps and other similar programs, identify promising evidence-based practices that the program might consider for the future, and present options for future research and evaluation of the program.[81]

Evaluations

In 1993, DOL commissioned Mathematica to conduct an evaluation known as the National Job Corps Study. The study's initial period was from late 1994 to early 1996, when approximately 81,000 eligible applicants nationwide were selected into the treatment or control group. According to the evaluation of outcomes during the four years after random assignment, Job Corps had several positive outcomes on youth in education and employment—including enrollment in education and job training programs, attainment of a high school diploma or GED, and attainment of a vocational or job-related certification.[82] For some outcomes, such as college enrollment and perceived health status, there were no or minor differences in the outcomes between youth enrolled in Job Corps and those who did not enroll.[83]

A follow-up report analyzed the longer-term impacts of the program based on earnings and employment rates (and not on other outcomes) through 2004—approximately 10 years after random assignment. This research found that the positive employment effects diminished such that the program and control groups were employed at a similar rate and had similar earnings. Researchers attributed the likely cause of the early increase in earnings to time spent in education and training, increases in the attainment of GED and vocational certificates, modest gains in functional literacy, and perhaps the job placement services offered by Job Corps. The follow-up also study found positive gains among some youth—those ages 20 through 24. These older youth remained in Job Corps for an average of 1.3 months longer than younger youth and, according to program staff at 23 randomly selected centers, were more highly motivated and had fewer behavior challenges. In addition, older youth spent more time in education and training during the four-year survey period, because they stayed longer in Job Corps. Separately, Mathematica

[80] Section 161(b) of WIOA.

[81] Jillian Berk et al., *The External Review of Job Corps: An Evidence Scan Report*; and Joanne Lee, Peter Z. Schochet, and Jillian Berk, *The External Review of Job Corps: Directions for Future Research*, Mathematica Policy Research for DOL, ETA, March 2018.

[82] Peter Z. Schochet, John Burghardt, and Sheena McConnell, *National Job Corps Study and Longer-Term Follow-Up Study: Impact and Benefit-Cost Findings Using Survey and Summary Earnings Records Data*, August 2006.

[83] For example, the study had small beneficial impacts on independent living, mobility, and use of child care; and had no impacts on a number of other outcomes, including illegal drug use, fertility, or custodial responsibility.

conducted a cost-benefit analysis based on the surveys at 12, 30, and 48 months after random assignment. The analysis concluded that the program was cost-effective despite its high costs.[84]

Financial Oversight

WIOA requires DOL to prepare and submit reports to Congress that include information about implementing financial oversight measures suggested in a 2013 DOL IG report about oversight of Job Corps funding,[85] a description of any budgetary shortfalls in the period covered by the report, and an explanation for approving contract expenditures that are in excess of the amount specified under a contract. The reports are to be provided every six months for an initial three-year period, then annually for another two years. WIOA further requires DOL to submit an additional report to Congress if the program has a budget shortfall, including an explanation of how the shortfall will be addressed. The report must be submitted within 90 days after the shortfall is identified.[86]

YouthBuild[87]

Overview and Purpose

In 2007, YouthBuild was transferred from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to DOL under the YouthBuild Transfer Act (P.L. 109-281). As stated in WIOA, the purpose of YouthBuild is to (1) enable disadvantaged youth to obtain the education and employment skills necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency in occupations in demand and post-secondary education and training opportunities; (2) provide disadvantaged youth with opportunities for meaningful work and service to communities; (3) foster the development of employment and leadership skills and commitment to community development among youth in low-income communities; (4) expand the supply of permanent affordable housing for homeless individuals and low-income families by utilizing the energy of disadvantaged youth; and (5) improve the quality and energy efficiency of community and other nonprofit and public facilities, including those facilities that are used to serve homeless and low-income families.[88]

Program Structure

DOL competitively awards YouthBuild funds to organizations that carry out the program in cooperation with subgrantees or contractors, or through arrangements made with local education agencies and certain other entities. Entities that are eligible to apply for funding include a public or private nonprofit agency or organization, including a consortium of such agencies or organizations. Specifically, such entities may include community-based or faith-based organizations; entities that carry out activities authorized under certain other parts of WIOA, such

[84] Sheena McConnell and Steven Glazerman, *National Job Corps: The Benefits and Costs of Job Corps*, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., June 2001.

[85] DOL, Office of Inspector General, *The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration Needs to Strengthen Controls Over Job Corps Funds*. For further information about prior financial concerns with the program, see CRS Report R43611, *Recent Developments in the Job Corps Program: Frequently Asked Questions*.

[86] Section 161(a) of WIOA. DOL submitted three such reports to Congress: one for the first and second quarters of PY2014 (July 1, 2014, to December 31, 2014), second and third quarters of PY2015 (January 1, 2015, to June 30, 2015) and the first and second quarters of PY2015 (July 1, 2015, to December 31, 2015).

[87] Title I, Chapter 4, Subtitle D, Section 171 of WIOA and 20 C.F.R. §672.

[88] Section 171(a) of WIOA.

as a local workforce development board; community action agencies; state or local housing development agencies; an Indian tribe or agencies primarily serving Indians; state or local youth service or conservation corps; or any other entity eligible to provide education or employment training under a federal program.[89]

While in the program, youth participate in a range of education and workforce investment activities, as listed in **Table 5**. These activities include instruction, skill building, alternative education, mentoring, and training in rehabilitation or construction of housing. Any housing unit that is rehabilitated or reconstructed may be available only for rental by, or sale to, homeless individuals or low-income families; or for use as transitional or permanent housing to assist homeless individuals achieve independent living. All educational programs, including programs that award academic credit, and activities supported with YouthBuild funds must be consistent with applicable state and local educational standards.

At least 40% of the time, youth must participate in certain work and skill development activities (these activities are denoted by footnote "a" in **Table 5**). At least an additional 50% of the time, participants must be engaged in education and related services and activities designed to meet their educational needs (these activities are denoted by footnote "b" in **Table 5**). If approved by the DOL Secretary, training and supports may be provided in additional in-demand industry sectors or occupations. This is consistent with a 2012 regulation for the program that enables grantees to expand their occupational skills training beyond construction skills training; however, all programs must still provide training in the construction trades.[90]

Table 5. Eligible Activities Funded by YouthBuild as Specified Under WIOA

Education and Workforce Investment Activities
• Work experience and skills training, coordinated, to the maximum extent feasible, with pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs (in the rehabilitation and construction activities described under "Supervision and Training," below) and if approved by the Secretary, in additional in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the region in which the program operates.[a]
• Occupational skills training.[a]
• Other paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing.[a]
• Services and activities designed to meet the educational needs of participants, including—(1) basic skills instruction and remedial education, (2) language instruction educational programs for participants who are English language learners, (3) secondary education services and activities designed to lead to the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent; (4) counseling and assistance in obtaining postsecondary education and required financial aid, and (5) alternative secondary school services.[b]
• Counseling services and related activities, such as comprehensive guidance and counseling on drug and alcohol abuse and referral.[b]
• Activities designed to develop employment and leadership skills, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors, and activities related to youth policy committees that participate in decision-making related to the program.[b]
• Supportive services and provision of need-based stipends to enable individuals to participate in the program, and supportive services to assist individuals, for a period not to exceed 12 months after the completion of training, in obtaining or retaining employment, or applying for and transitioning to postsecondary education.[b]
• Job search assistance.[a]

[89] Section 173(b) of WIOA (Section 173A(b) of WIA).

[90] DOL, ETA, "YouthBuild Program Final Rule," 77 *Federal Register* 9112, February 15, 2012.

Supervision and Training

- Supervision and training for participants in the rehabilitation or construction of housing, including residential housing for homeless individuals or low-income families, or transitional housing for homeless individuals. If approved by the Secretary, this may also include supervision and training in additional in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the region in which the program operates.
- Supervision and training for participants in the rehabilitation or construction of community and other public facilities, except that not more than 15% of funds appropriated may be used for such supervision and training. If approved by the Secretary, this may also include supervision and training in additional in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the region in which the program operates.

Other

- Payment of administrative costs of the applicant, except that not more than 10% of the amount of assistance provided to the grant recipient may be used for such costs.
- Adult mentoring.
- Provision of wages, stipends, or benefits to participants in the program.
- Ongoing training and technical assistance that are related to developing and carrying out the program.
- Follow-up services.

Source: Section 173A of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA; P.L. 113-128).

a. This activity counts toward the requirement that at least 40% of the time, youth must participate in certain work and skill development activities.

b. This activity counts toward the requirement that at least 50% of the time, youth must participate in certain work and skill development activities.

Participants

A youth is eligible for the program if he or she is a dropout and is (1) ages 16 through 24; (2) a member of a low-income family, a youth in foster care, a youth offender, an individual with a disability, a child of incarcerated parents, *or* a migrant youth; *and* (3) a school dropout. However, up to 25% of youth in the program are not required to meet the income or dropout criteria, so long as they are basic skills deficient despite having earned a high school diploma, GED, or the equivalent; *or* have been referred by a high school for the purpose of obtaining a high school diploma.

Allocations

Grants are competitively awarded to organizations based on ranked scores, in conjunction with other factors, such as the applicant's potential for developing a successful YouthBuild program; the need for the program in the community; the applicant's commitment to providing skills training, leadership development, and education to participants; regional distribution of grantees; and the applicant's coordination of activities to be carried out with certain other stakeholders, including employers, one-stop partners, and national service and other systems; among other criteria.

DOL makes awards for three years (two years of program operations with a one-year period of follow-up). Applicants must provide cash or in-kind resources equivalent to at least 25% of the grant award amount as matching funds. Prior investments and federal resources do not count toward the match.

Performance

WIOA requires YouthBuild grantees to meet the primary indicators of performance described in the Youth Activities program. Specifically, these indicators pertain to entry into education, training, or unsubsidized employment (both two and four quarters after exiting the program); median earnings; obtaining a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma or its equivalent; participation in an education or training program that leads to a credential or employment; and program effectiveness in serving employers.[91]

DOL contracted with MDRC, a social policy research organization, to conduct an evaluation of the program. The evaluation involved youth randomly assigned to a YouthBuild program or to a control group that could use other services in the community. The evaluation involved nearly 4,000 youth who enrolled in the study between 2011 and 2013 and included 75 programs across the country. The evaluation examined outcomes two and a half years and four years after youth enrolled in the study. The evaluation found that YouthBuild participants were more likely to obtain a high school equivalency credential and to enroll in college, with a very small effect size on obtaining a degree. The program led to an increase in civic engagement and employment and earnings, but it did not significantly increase work. It also did not have effects on other measures of youth development or rates of involvement in the criminal justice system. A cost analysis of YouthBuild found that its costs exceeded its benefits; however, researchers cannot yet draw conclusions about the longer-term impact on investments in the program.[92]

Reentry Employment Opportunities Program[93]

Overview and Purpose

Grants to provide education and employment activities for youth offenders have been funded by DOL since FY1999.[94] Under WIA, these grants were made part of the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program. Funding for the program was authorized under both WIA and Section 112 (Responsible Reintegration of Offenders) of the Second Chance Act (P.L. 110-199), enacted on April 9, 2008. The Second Chance Act authorizes DOL to make grants to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of providing mentoring, job training and job placement services, and other comprehensive transitional services to assist eligible offenders ages 18 and older in obtaining and retaining employment. Since the enactment of WIOA, Congress has appropriated funding for the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program, now known as the Reentry Employment Opportunities program, under the authority of Section 169 of WIOA and the Second Chance Act. Section 169 authorizes evaluations and research.

The youth component of the REO program (and its predecessor programs) has been comprised of related initiatives that seek to assist youth offenders and youth at risk of dropping out (or who have dropped out) with pre-release, mentoring, housing, case management, and employment

[91] Section 171(c) of WIOA (and Section 173(c) of WIA).

[92] Cynthia Miller et al., *Building a Future: Interim Impact Findings from the YouthBuild Evaluation,* for DOL, ETA, November 2016; Cynthia Miller et al., *Laying a Foundation: Four-Year Results from the National YouthBuild Evaluation* for DOL, ETA, May 2018.

[93] Title I, Chapter 4, Subtitle D, Section 169 of WIOA.

[94] This program was known as the Youth Offender Pilot Program, and funded 14 communities that provided educational, employment, re-entry, and other services to youth.

services; to reduce violence within persistently dangerous schools through a combination of mentoring, educational, employment, case management, and violence prevention strategies; and to provide alternative education and related services for youth at risk of involvement with the justice system. Currently, the program supports education and reentry initiatives.

Program Structure

The earliest DOL initiatives for youth offenders, from FY1999 through FY2004, operated under what is known as the Youth Offender Demonstration Project (YODP).[95] The pilot funded 52 grantees to assist youth at risk of court or gang involvement, youth offenders, and gang members ages 14 to 24 in finding long-term employment.

Since FY2005, programs for youth offenders have funded projects that have a focus similar to the earlier projects under YODP. These projects have included (1) education-related grants, including Pathways to Justice Careers and Job ChalleNGe grants; (2) apprenticeship and related grants, including Youth Offender Registered Apprenticeship, Alternative Education, and Project Expansion Grants; (3) grants that focus on reentry, including Reentry Project Grants, Beneficiary-Choice Demonstration, High Growth Youth Offender Initiative, Planning, State/Local Juvenile Offender Implementation, and Replication Grants; and (4) grants that focus on community service, including Face Forward Intermediary and Community Grants, Civic Justice Grants, and Serving Young Adult Ex-Offenders through Training and Service Learning. Grantees have included local and state governments, nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations; school districts; and community colleges.[96]

Appropriations in recent years have supported Reentry Projects grants, which focus on preventing and reducing crime and enhancing reentry strategies for young adults served in communities with elevated levels of poverty and crime.[97] These projects are designed to assist youth ages 18 to 24 who are reentering, with a focus on trying new approaches, addressing gaps in services, building or translating research knowledge, or building capacity. Funding is provided to intermediary organizations that have an affiliate network or offices in at least three communities and cross at least two states; and to community-based organizations that provide direct services.

Participants

Each of the initiatives funded under the Reentry Employment Opportunities program (and its predecessor programs) have generally served select groups of at-risk youth. However, the projects generally serve youth ages 14 through 24 (or 18 through 24) who have been involved with or have a high risk of involvement in gangs or the juvenile justice system or criminal justice system.

[95] The earliest funding for the program was authorized under Title IV of the Job Training Partnership Act. See U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, *Notice Inviting Proposals for Youth Offender Demonstration Projects*, August 28, 1998.

[96] For a list of grantees and grant funding amounts, see DOL, ETA, *Reentry Employment Opportunities: Grantees*, https://www.doleta.gov/REO/Grantees.cfm.

[97] DOL, ETA, *Workforce System Results for the Quarter Ending December 31, 2019*, p. 19; DOL, ETA, *Reentry Employment Opportunities Grantees*, https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/reentry/grantees; DOL, ETA, *Reentry Demonstration Projects for Young Adults*, March 2018, https://www.doleta.gov/REO/pdf/REO_Fact_Sheet_March_2018.pdf.

Allocations

As noted, grants have been competitively awarded to entities such as community-based organizations and state and local juvenile justice agencies, based on ranked scores and other factors, depending on the project.

Performance

DOL measures employment attainment, employment retention, average earnings, credential attainment, measurable skills gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. According to DOL, it holds grantees accountable through these performance measures and by considering prior performance on placement in education or employment and certificate/degree attainment when scoring grant applicants.[98]

[98] *FY 2021 Congressional Budget Justification Employment and Training Administration*, p. TES-70.

Appendix. Funding for the WIOA Youth Activities Program

Table A-1. Youth Activities State Allotments, PY2015-PY2020

Includes allotments for outlying areas and Native Americans, excludes set-asides for evaluation and program integrity

State	PY2015 (P.L. 113-235)	PY2016 (P.L. 114-113)	PY2017 (P.L. 115-31)	PY2018 (P.L. 115-141)	PY2019 (P.L. 115-245)	PY2020 (P.L. 116-94)
Alabama	$10,973,635	$13,242,811	$15,935,826	$16,810,423	$15,149,798	$13,818,197
Alaska	2,037,653	2,296,191	2,749,556	3,248,821	4,229,167	5,076,190
Arizona	18,380,399	20,040,831	21,927,448	22,132,740	25,610,047	33,740,829
Arkansas	7,694,400	7,839,730	7,020,353	6,559,046	5,911,108	6,222,886
California	120,707,084	128,788,366	122,708,017	122,420,854	119,017,698	134,926,913
Colorado	11,835,030	11,182,905	10,014,113	9,356,087	8,431,842	7,969,239
Connecticut	9,634,681	10,313,964	10,849,939	10,136,991	10,709,715	9,768,378
Delaware	2,037,653	2,139,306	2,128,572	2,209,670	2,212,652	2,242,411
District of Columbia	2,329,955	3,086,388	3,048,727	3,369,642	4,331,649	5,121,772
Florida	42,774,978	49,787,759	47,191,033	50,918,130	45,888,161	41,854,792
Georgia	27,630,735	30,707,383	27,497,972	25,691,083	23,153,178	21,118,115
Hawaii	2,037,653	2,139,306	2,128,572	2,209,670	2,212,652	2,242,411
Idaho	3,116,131	2,944,428	2,636,688	2,463,432	2,220,081	2,242,411
Illinois	42,336,174	40,003,397	45,262,696	42,733,627	41,773,340	47,902,600
Indiana	16,203,657	17,064,726	15,281,190	14,277,065	12,866,699	13,241,878
Iowa	4,781,261	5,118,005	5,042,166	4,779,676	4,307,514	3,928,902
Kansas	5,370,179	5,166,437	4,626,462	5,170,980	4,660,163	4,250,555
Kentucky	13,717,594	12,961,737	13,006,059	13,770,245	13,375,729	14,588,219
Louisiana	9,194,017	12,548,488	15,937,361	17,165,657	15,924,333	18,661,916
Maine	3,214,985	3,208,693	2,873,333	2,684,527	2,419,335	2,242,411
Maryland	12,364,002	14,375,433	13,351,957	12,474,601	14,546,358	13,267,797

State	PY2015 (P.L. 113-235)	PY2016 (P.L. 114-113)	PY2017 (P.L. 115-31)	PY2018 (P.L. 115-141)	PY2019 (P.L. 115-245)	PY2020 (P.L. 116-94)
Massachusetts	16,504,685	15,595,256	13,965,303	13,047,645	12,354,890	11,268,949
Michigan	31,250,104	29,709,018	26,603,952	28,612,013	34,878,283	35,039,178
Minnesota	9,078,036	8,577,825	8,630,212	10,094,772	9,097,556	8,297,921
Mississippi	9,151,084	10,193,683	10,648,637	10,053,302	10,396,417	12,695,917
Missouri	14,228,439	16,472,508	14,750,868	14,066,190	12,676,655	11,562,432
Montana	2,152,782	2,139,306	2,128,572	2,209,670	2,280,623	2,257,550
Nebraska	2,425,096	2,291,470	2,432,570	2,656,124	2,862,935	3,321,693
Nevada	9,034,617	9,531,729	9,913,269	9,261,869	9,921,829	9,330,673
New Hampshire	2,037,653	2,139,306	2,128,572	2,209,670	2,212,652	2,242,411
New Jersey	23,282,287	24,898,651	22,296,345	20,831,255	24,036,015	21,923,354
New Mexico	5,249,778	6,167,206	7,484,241	9,176,874	9,124,699	9,451,630
New York	52,128,262	54,003,637	49,406,010	50,223,205	62,137,502	56,675,887
North Carolina	26,347,165	25,235,370	28,746,951	27,731,837	27,582,642	26,247,804
North Dakota	2,037,653	2,139,306	2,128,572	2,209,670	2,212,652	2,242,411
Ohio	28,593,170	28,162,375	30,130,209	36,354,942	41,626,582	45,496,637
Oklahoma	6,941,080	6,558,618	7,802,022	9,577,406	8,631,298	7,872,645
Oregon	10,431,168	11,441,241	10,245,449	9,572,222	8,626,626	10,563,715
Pennsylvania	30,984,178	29,652,886	32,264,694	39,419,602	36,515,461	34,144,371
Puerto Rico	19,489,676	23,096,083	25,176,038	26,554,369	29,825,410	28,606,753
Rhode Island	4,106,989	3,880,689	3,582,507	3,347,101	3,395,462	3,097,016
South Carolina	11,474,747	14,636,640	13,932,904	13,017,374	11,731,447	10,700,304
South Dakota	2,037,653	2,139,306	2,128,572	2,209,670	2,212,652	2,242,411
Tennessee	17,503,627	18,911,472	16,934,922	17,503,950	15,774,815	14,388,278
Texas	54,914,867	51,888,988	58,289,678	75,959,298	68,455,626	62,438,675
Utah	3,928,231	3,711,780	3,323,840	3,656,938	3,538,726	3,227,687

State	PY2015 (P.L. 113-235)	PY2016 (P.L. 114-113)	PY2017 (P.L. 115-31)	PY2018 (P.L. 115-141)	PY2019 (P.L. 115-245)	PY2020 (P.L. 116-94)
Vermont	2,037,653	2,139,306	2,128,572	2,209,670	2,212,652	2,242,411
Virginia	13,325,559	15,728,252	14,084,399	13,158,915	11,859,006	10,816,651
Washington	15,945,865	18,966,351	18,561,132	19,115,058	21,151,649	25,394,224
West Virginia	3,987,564	5,350,384	6,247,535	5,837,010	6,472,612	7,298,882
Wisconsin	14,041,859	13,268,135	11,985,441	11,197,879	10,091,692	9,204,676
Wyoming	2,037,653	2,139,306	2,128,572	2,209,670	2,212,652	2,242,411
State Total	815,061,036	855,722,367	851,428,600	883,868,137	885,060,937	896,964,379
Outlying Areas Total	2,042,759	2,144,668	2133906	2,215,208	2,218,198	2,248,031
Native Americans	12,443,205	13,063,965	12,998,414	13,493,655	13,511,865	13,693,590
Total	829,547,000	870,931,000	866,560,920	899,577,000	900,791,000	912,906,000

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) presentation of Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA), *State Statutory Formula Funding*, http://www.doleta.gov/budget/statfund.cfm.

Note: Does not include funds allocated under the Youth Activities program for evaluation activities. Funds appropriated for a given fiscal year correspond to funding for a program year. The program year is July 1 through June 30, although funds may be made available on April 1, pursuant to Section 189(g)(1)(B) of the Workforce Investment Act. Funds for the program are available for two program years.

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