

OUTCOME GOAL 1.2 - ASSIST YOUTH IN MAKING THE TRANSITION TO WORK

Students at Job Corps Center learn methods to cut and install siding.

Photo by: Michael Carpenter



Overview

Studies reveal strong correlations among poverty, lack of a high school diploma, joblessness, youth violence, and crime. DOL administers youth programs under the Workforce Investment Act, including the Job Corps program, the youth formula grant program, the Youth Opportunity Grant Program, as well as the recently sunset School-to-Work initiative, and research and demonstration projects that address the persistent unemployment challenges of at-risk youth both in and out-of-school.

Serving the Public

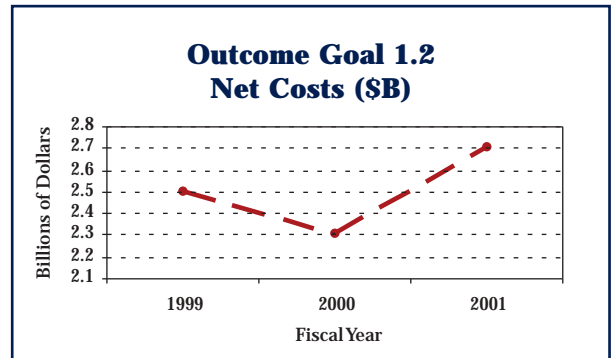
DOL's youth programs primarily serve those youth who are out-of-school, and those who are in school but at risk of dropping out of school. They are intended to provide the necessary support for in-school youth to complete secondary school, move into post-secondary education, and transition into successful careers. In addition, these programs provide education, training, and support services, to the hardest to serve out-of-school youth providing them with the skills necessary to enter and succeed in today's workforce.

Statistics support the notion that education and training programs are more effective when they are delivered with extensive support services. DOL has found that the following 10 elements are key ingredients of effective youth programs: (1) tutoring and study skills training; (2) alternative secondary school services; (3) summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning; (4) paid and unpaid work experiences; (5) occupational skills training; (6) leadership development; (7) supportive services; (8) adult mentoring; (9) comprehensive guidance and counseling; and (10) long-term follow-up. The Workforce Investment Act substantially reformed the formula-funded youth program to require this comprehensive range of services to meet the employment, career, and educational goals of youth.

In addition to the formula-funded program, the Job Corps administers services in a concentrated manner. Job Corps provides intensive, long-term training in a residential setting and offers a wide range of supportive services, including a secure, drug-free learning environment, medical care, and career and personal counseling. The Job Corps has also placed increased emphasis on education—especially the attainment of a high school diploma which has been shown in many studies to increase an individual's employment and earnings potential. During DOL's recent Summit on the 21st Century Workforce, the Departments of Education and Labor announced a new joint proposal to include establishing a Job Corps distance-learning program through a National High School and forming partnerships between Job Corps centers and public schools.

Program Costs

The decrease in net costs in FY 2000 may be substantially attributed to the transition from the Job Training Partnership Act program to that under the Workforce Investment Act. The subsequent increase in costs in FY 2001 reflects: (1) the increased spending by the States on program operations as the training tempo increased following the start-up activities in FY 2000, and (2) the start-up of a new youth opportunity grant program funded at \$300 million.



DOL Challenges for the Future

According to 2000 Census data, 16.2 percent of children under 18 years old (over five million children) are living in poverty. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate of 16-24 year olds has increased from 9.1 percent in June 2000 to 10.4 percent through June 2001. Over the next four years the Census Bureau estimates that the number of 15-24 year olds will increase by over two million. In order to meet the challenge of serving these young people most in need, DOL will focus its efforts to improve the delivery of youth services under its Workforce Investment Act, Job Corps, and Youth Opportunity Grants programs.

The Department of Labor enters the 21st Century facing many new and continuing challenges. Preparing all youth for future careers in a rapidly changing, technologically driven economy presents special challenges. By focusing on a holistic youth development approach to serving young people, DOL youth programs will equip youth with the skills necessary to succeed in the 21st Century workforce.

ASSIST YOUTH IN MAKING THE TRANSITION TO WORK

Of the 14-18 year-old youth registered under the WIA youth program, 50 percent will be either employed, in advanced training, post-secondary education, military service or apprenticeships in the third quarter after program exit.

Results: This goal was substantially achieved, with 47.4 percent of youth either employed, in advanced training, post-secondary education, military service or apprenticeships in the third quarter after program exit.

Program Description: Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) serves eligible low-income youth between the ages of 14–21 who have barriers to employment, including those who have deficiencies in basic skills or meet one or more of these criteria: homeless, a runaway, pregnant, parenting, an offender, school dropout, or a foster child. The program also serves youth with disabilities and others who may require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. Programs and services are offered to both in and out-of-school youth, with at least 30 percent of the funds being spent on out-of-school youth. Service strategies prepare youth for post-secondary education by stressing strong linkages between academic and occupational learning, and preparing youth for employment. Local communities create opportunities for youth by providing required program elements, including: tutoring, alternative schools, summer employment, occupational training, work experience, supportive services, leadership development, mentoring, counseling, and follow-up services.

Analysis of Results: Two factors have had an impact on the Department's fully achieving this goal:

- Results for this goal were computed using preliminary data. Only 42 of the 53 States and jurisdictions have reported final data, and 7 of the States submitted data that are questionable. For the most part, reporting problems can be attributed to introducing a new performance data reporting system with the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act this year. The Department is now working with States experiencing problems to obtain accurate data. When the States report final data in January 2002, results should better reflect actual performance.
- Results include three quarters of participant data from the prior Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Title II-C youth program. Data used to compute this measure are based on youth who terminated during the final three quarters of the JTPA program, with only one quarter of data from the WIA program. Since the JTPA program placed much less emphasis on follow-up and measuring longer-term outcomes, lower retention levels in this first year of the program most likely stem from the JTPA data.

Strategies: The Workforce Investment Act, fully effective in Program Year 2000, introduced substantial reforms for youth programs, placing a stronger emphasis on more comprehensive, long-term activities coupled with at least twelve months of follow-up after program completion. During this initial period of program implementation, DOL mounted efforts to establish Youth Councils as a new governance body and advocate for

youth in the local communities. DOL also provided technical assistance and training to help the States and local communities implement the newly required WIA youth services as well as the performance management and reporting systems that support the program.

Goal Assessment and Future Plans:

To increase the program's focus on educational attainment for this age group, the Department has revised the Program Year 2002 performance measures for the 14 to 18 year-old youth served by the Workforce Investment Act. The new measure targets attainment of a secondary school diploma or equivalent by the first quarter after exit for 51 percent of the 14-18 year-old youth who enter the program without these credentials.

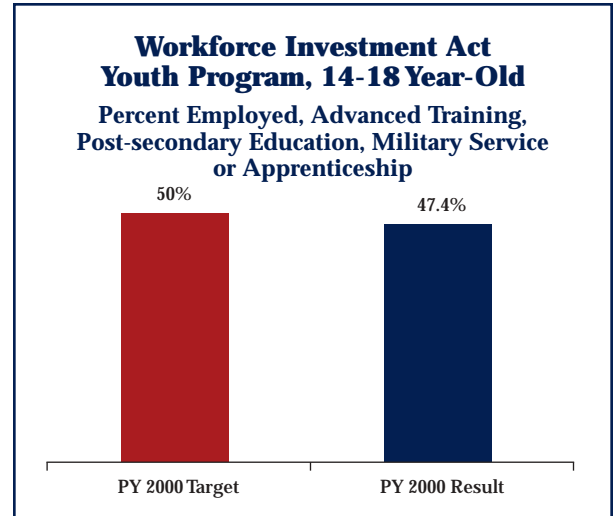
Program Evaluation: The Office of Inspector General issued the final audit report on *Job Training Partnership Act, Title II-C Out-of-School Program Performance* on March 19, 2001. The OIG reported that:

- Positive outcomes for the Title II-C Out-of-School Youth Program were significantly lower than those reported;
- Documentation supporting youth employability enhancements was seriously deficient; and
- Participants' post-program earnings were affected by program interventions and level of their participation.

Recommendations included:

- Conduct data validation effort as a part of program monitoring; and
- Notify all States and the substate grantees of:

- Audit results with emphasis on the necessity for States and their grantees to validate outcome data as part of their monitoring program and training provider eligibility determinations;



- The importance of documenting not only reported outcomes but also specific services provided, dates services were provided, and actual program exit date; and
- The importance of not only enrolling youth in occupational skills training activities, but also finding ways to keep them actively participating in the program to completion, to maximize their post-program earnings.

In response, to OIG's findings and recommendations, the Department issued comprehensive guidance on youth services and a notice about this audit to the States and substate grantees. Finally, DOL is undertaking a data validation initiative which is attempting to create both more precise programming specifications and more precise standards for validating data quality. For further information about this audit, please refer to Appendix 3. ■

(Goal 1.2A — FY 2000 Annual Performance Plan)

ASSIST YOUTH IN MAKING THE TRANSITION TO WORK

Of the 19-21 year-old youth served under the WIA youth program, 70 percent will be employed in the third quarter after program exit.

Results: This goal was achieved. 74.4 percent of 19-21 year-old youth were employed in the third quarter after program exit.

Program Description: Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) serves eligible low-income youth, between the ages of 14 –21, who have barriers to employment, including

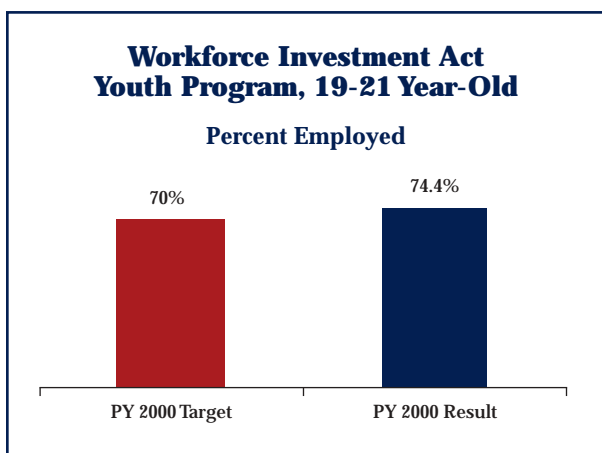
those who have deficiencies in basic skills or meet one or more of these criteria: homeless, a runaway, pregnant, parenting, an offender, school dropout, or a foster child. The program also serves

youth with disabilities and others who may require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. Programs and services are offered to both in and out-of-school youth, with at least 30 percent of the funds being spent on out-of-school youth. Service strategies prepare youth for post-secondary education by stressing strong linkages between academic and occupational learning, and preparing youth for employment. Local communities create opportunities for youth by providing required program elements, including: tutoring,

alternative schools, summer employment, occupational training, work experience, supportive services, leadership development, mentoring, counseling, and follow-up services.

Analysis of Results: Results were based on fourth quarter reports as of June 30, 2001. Final data will be available when States submit the annual report. That data will contain an additional quarter of wage records so results are expected to vary from this report. The Department will analyze performance for the first year under the WIA in greater detail when all data are available. However, the higher rate of success for the 19-21 year old youth may relate to the similarity of WIA performance objectives for the older participants to the measures under its predecessor program, the Job Training Partnership Act. The newer legislation continues the emphasis on employment for 19-21 year old participants, requiring less programmatic redesign than WIA's focus on education related accomplishments for 14-18 year old participants.

Strategies: The Workforce Investment Act, fully effective in Program Year 2000, introduced substantial reforms for youth programs, placing a stronger emphasis on more comprehensive, long-term activities for youth coupled with at least twelve months of follow-up after program completion. During this initial period of program implementation, DOL mounted efforts to establish Youth Councils as a new local governance body and advocate for youth in the local communities. DOL also provided technical assistance and training to help the States and local communities implement the newly required WIA youth services as well as the



performance management and reporting systems that support the program.

Goal Assessment and Future Plans:

The Department has revised the performance measures for 19-21 year old youth in the FY 2002 Annual Performance Plan, adding an entered employment target of 63 percent and increasing the target for retention in employment in the third quarter after program exit to 77 percent.

Program Evaluation: The Office of Inspector General issued the final audit report on *Job Training Partnership Act, Title II-C Out-of-School Program Performance* on March 19, 2001. OIG reported that:

- Positive outcomes for the Title II-C Out-of-School Youth Program were significantly lower than those reported;
- Documentation supporting youth employability enhancements was seriously deficient; and
- Participants' post-program earnings were affected favorably by program interventions and the level of their participation.

Recommendations included:

- Conduct data validation effort as a part of program monitoring; and
- Notify all States and substate grantees of:
 - Audit results with emphasis on the necessity for States and their grantees to validate outcome data as part of their monitoring program and training provider eligibility determinations;

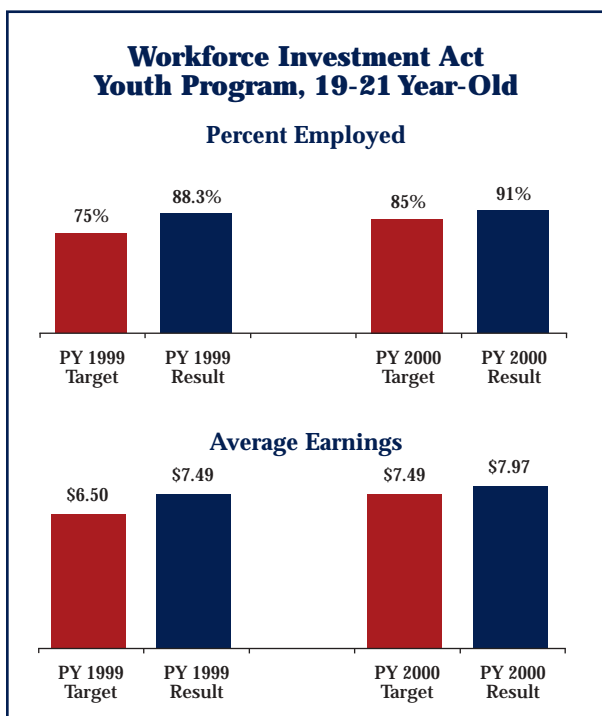
- The importance of documenting not only reported outcomes but also specific services provided, dates services were provided, and actual program exit date; and
- The importance of not only enrolling youth in occupational skills training activities, but also encouraging participation in the program to completion, to maximize their post-program earnings.

In response to OIG's findings and recommendations, the Department issued comprehensive guidance on youth services and a notice about this audit to the States and substate grantees. Finally, DOL is undertaking a data validation initiative to create both more precise programming specifications and more precise standards for validating data quality. For further information about this audit, please refer to Appendix 3. ■

(Goal 1.2E — FY 2000 Annual Performance Plan)

ENHANCE JOB PLACEMENT AND AVERAGE WAGES FOR JOB CORPS GRADUATES

Increase the percent of Job Corps graduates who get jobs or pursue education to 85%; those who get jobs will have an average entry wage increase from the previous year (\$7.49) and 70% will still have a job or will be pursuing education after 90 days.



Results: The goal was substantially met. Ninety-one percent of Job Corps graduates entered employment at an average hourly wage of \$7.97 or pursued further education upon completion of the program. The 90-day job retention rate after initial placement was 67 percent.

Program Description: The DOL Job Corps program is a highly intensive, primarily residential training program for severely disadvantaged youth ages 16 to 24. The program provides occupational skills and academic training, social education, and other support to over 70,000 participants at 118 centers. To realize the objectives of the Workforce Investment Act, the Department has expanded the scope of the Job Corps' program operations to provide support services for up to 12 months after students graduate from the program.

Analysis of Results: In Program Year 2000, the Department achieved significant success in placing Job Corps graduates into employment or advanced education. In addition, the starting average hourly wage for graduates rose to \$7.97, exceeding the targeted wage of \$7.49 by 48 cents. The 67 percent of Job Corps graduates who remained in jobs or educational programs after 90 days fell short of the 70 percent target for this new measure. Several factors contributed to this result: a target that proved overly ambitious in light of economic conditions that could have influenced employers' retention of newly hired workers; the need to enhance services to meet the broader career transition needs of Job Corps graduates; and delays in revising contracts to introduce the new services.

The Office of Job Corps' Management Information System serves as the source for this data. The reliability of the data compiled through this rigorously designed and comprehensive data collection system is routinely monitored and reviewed at several levels by management and a contractor retained by Job Corps to provide data verification services.

Strategies: To maximize the benefits of the Job Corps program for disadvantaged youth, the Department emphasizes a number of strategies including improving the quality of the education and training programs and tailoring services to the individual needs of each student. Services that address individual needs may include occupational exploration programs, a comprehensive academic program, competency-based vocation education programs, work-based learning at employer work sites, social and employability skills development, counseling and related support

services, driver's education program, health care, child care support at some centers, and post-program placement and support. Other strategies focus on management and outreach, for example: integrating performance measurement into the competitive procurement process; and maintaining partnerships with communities, employers, and educational institutions to further enhance the career and educational opportunities for graduates.

In the future, increased emphasis will be placed on providing career development services that meet the broader career transition needs of Job Corps graduates, to ensure their success over the longer term. During enrollment, expanded services will address areas such as career and personal counseling, increased career exploration options, and integrated academic and vocational training. After students leave Job Corps, career development services may include placement assistance, transitional support services (housing, transportation, and child care), and linkages with communities, employers, and other partners to assist in graduates' successful transition to the work force.



Goal Assessment and Future Plans:

In the FY 2002 Annual Performance Plan, DOL has increased the target rates for Job Corps graduates who enter employment or education and the average hourly wages, and has added an indicator for attainment of high school diplomas to measure the expected outcomes of an interagency agreement with the Department of Education.

Edgar, a computer repair student shows his skill with the installation of a circuit card.

Photo by: Michael Carpenter

Audits and Evaluations: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. completed a comprehensive, four year evaluation of the Job Corps program, entitled, *National Job Corps Study: The Impacts of*



John is one of more than 700 Job Corps students who participated in one of the more unusual vocational training experiences offered by the Job Corps — fighting fires in America's National forests. In August, John and his fellow students gathered from 11 Job Corps Centers to assist professional firefighters in fighting the numerous forest fires that threatened our National Forests in the western United States — where summer daytime temperatures of 90-plus degrees were further heated to 110 degrees on the fire lines. During this month of intense training, John learned the meaning of teamwork, response to supervision, and how to use fire-fighting equipment. With completion of the program, he is qualified for fire fighting and camp support assignments with the National Forest service.

Photo by: DOL/Job Corps

Job Corps on Participants' Employment and Related Outcomes. The national longitudinal study concluded that the Job Corps program offers a favorable return on the taxpayers' investment; for example, for every dollar spent for Job Corps, the benefit to society is \$2.02. The study also reported that, by comparison to a sample of disadvantaged youth who did not enroll in the Job Corps program, participants realized significant increases in education and training, including much greater attainment of General Educational Development (GED) and vocational certificates; positive employment and earnings gains; higher paying jobs with more benefits; significant reductions in arrests, convictions and incarcerations; and reduction in the receipt of public assistance.

In Program Year 2000, Job Corps, along with over 100 other Federal Government entities, was selected to participate in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), a national measure of citizen satisfaction with

Federal services. The survey questioned a national sample of parents and guardians of Job Corps graduates about their level of satisfaction with the services their children received while enrolled in Job Corps. Job Corps received a customer satisfaction rating of 80 on the ACSI index, higher than both the Federal Government-wide score (68.6 on the index) and the private sector comparable score (71.2 on the index). Additionally, parents and guardians demonstrated confidence that Job Corps will continue to be effective in the future with a rating of 86 on the index, and that they would be likely to recommend Job Corps to other parents and guardians.

For more information about this program evaluation, please refer to Appendix 3. ■

(Goal 1.2B — FY 2000 Annual Performance Plan)



A Job Corps electrical systems technical instructor trains students on proper methods and tools for preparing coaxial cable for installation.

Photo by: Michael Carpenter

HELP YOUTH TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Engage two million youth in School-to-Work activities.

Results: This goal was achieved, as 2.9 million secondary students participated in School-to-Work activities.

Program Description: The School-to-Work (STW) Opportunities Act of 1994 established a national framework within which States and local grantees could build on education and workforce development reforms to facilitate the education and career preparation of young people. The Act's goals are to increase academic achievement, improve technical skills, broaden career opportunities, and prepare all students for high-skill, high-wage occupations. Students participating in STW classes receive career-related instruction as a complement to their traditional academic classes. The initiative provides venture capital to support grantees in building their STW systems.

Analysis of Results: Student participation in STW experiences has grown considerably. During Program Year 2000, the number of students engaged in these activities increased from 1.6 million to 2.9 million. This increase is most likely due to the establishment of the STW infrastructure. With program components in place – schools, teachers, counselors, and employers are able to promote the availability of services and activities, thereby increasing student demand.

During the lifetime of the School-to-Work Opportunities, other results reveal that:

- Between 1995 and 2000, the number of sub-State funded local partnerships grew from 294 to 1,931 – or 560 percent.
- Between 1995 and 2000, the number of secondary schools within the geographic areas of local partnerships rose from 5,409 to 10,268 – nearly 40 percent of the nation's public high schools.
- Between 1995 and 2000, the number of employers participating in any aspect of School-to-Work rose from about 178,000 to nearly 319,000 – or 80 percent.
- Between 1995 and 2000, the number of postsecondary institutions participating in local partnerships grew from 2,600 to 3,450 – 33 percent.

Goal Assessment: Due to the sunset of the School-to-Work legislation on October 1, 2001, the Department has discontinued this goal. ■

(Goal 1.2C — FY 2000 Annual Performance Plan)