



# OJJDP FACT SHEET

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## Job Training for Juveniles: Project CRAFT

by Robin Hamilton and Kay McKinney

A successful vocational training program for high-risk youth and juvenile offenders sponsored by the Home Builders Institute (HBI), the educational arm of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), is addressing youth crime and unemployment and helping to reduce recidivism. The program provides these youth with social, personal, and vocational skills and employment opportunities to help them achieve economic success and avoid involvement in criminal activity.

The Community Restitution and Apprenticeship Focused Training program, or Project CRAFT, was started in 1994 by HBI in three demonstration sites (Bismarck, ND; Nashville, TN; and Sabillasville, MD) with a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The program has been replicated in five sites in Florida (Avon Park, Daytona Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Lantana, and Orlando) with funding from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and in Texas with support from the Texas Youth Commission. Several other States have also expressed interest in replicating the project.

### Program Description

Project CRAFT offers preapprenticeship training and job placement in the home building industry and related occupations for adjudicated youth referred to the program by their State departments of juvenile justice. The program uses a holistic approach that combines career training, support services (employability training, social skills training, case management, etc.), and community service activities sponsored by the construction industry. Project CRAFT can be used as a prevention or intervention program or as an alternative to incarceration. Project CRAFT can be implemented in residential juvenile correctional facilities, or it can operate as a community-based program for youth in aftercare or under day treatment supervision.

HBI's Project CRAFT model includes 10 components: outreach and recruitment; assessment and screening; individualized development plans; case management services; industry-validated, trades-related training; building industry-related academics; community service; academic preparation and substance abuse

treatment; employability and life skills training; and community transition and long-term followup. HBI, juvenile correctional facilities, and other providers coordinate the juveniles' treatment plans so that they mirror Project CRAFT's goal of providing hands-on community service training projects that teach industry-related skills and reinforce worker skills and positive attitudes and behaviors.

Students receive preapprenticeship certificate training, an industry-validated curriculum, which includes 840 hours of hands-on training and classroom instruction in the use of tools, safety, work habits, and trades-related mathematics. Training focuses on skill achievement; students must master several skills related to the building industry before they are eligible for graduation and job placement. A student's performance is evaluated weekly by Project CRAFT journey-level instructors. After graduating from the program, participants are placed in industry-related jobs and receive long-term followup services.

Project CRAFT is sponsored by the home building industry and receives support from local Home Builder Associations (HBA's). These relationships provide direct links to home building industry employers and job opportunities. Many local HBA's provide Project CRAFT with in-kind contributions and employment opportunities for graduates.

### Program Partnerships

The program works in partnership with private juvenile and corrections facilities, juvenile judges, juvenile justice system personnel, education agencies, community-based organizations, and other human service agencies. In some instances, juvenile judges and probation officers refer youth directly to Project CRAFT; in other cases, Project CRAFT staff provide vocational training while personnel from other partnering agencies provide case management, substance abuse treatment, or other services that are part of care in a residential facility. Integration of these services and access to community aftercare services have been instrumental in ensuring that youth make a successful transition back into their communities. Project CRAFT personnel work

hard to involve communities in the program. Local builders make presentations to program participants about working in the industry and often hire Project CRAFT graduates. The students also become involved in community projects and take field trips into the community.

Project CRAFT has developed successful partnerships with local school districts that allow students to receive education credits for the work they do through Project CRAFT, with mentors who talk to students on topics related to life skills, and with organizations that work with the students and make in-kind donations of equipment and materials.

The program also has developed partnerships and relationships with community-based organizations, community development organizations, housing authorities, developers, housing agencies, Habitat for Humanity, local governments, historical societies, and other organizations. These partnerships help the youth reintegrate into the community and provide the community with skilled workers and volunteers.

## Outcomes

The project was independently evaluated over a 4-year period by Resource Development Group, Inc. (RDG), of Bowie, MD. According to an executive summary published by RDG in 1999, evaluators documented the following outcomes:

- ◆ Project CRAFT has a high rate of job placement for its graduates. By the end of the national program (September 1998), 94 of the 140 graduates in the 3 original demonstration sites had been placed in jobs in the home building industry.
- ◆ The cumulative recidivism rate for students participating in Project CRAFT at the three national demonstration sites was 26 percent, which is significantly lower than the national rate of 70 percent (as cited in the executive summary). The recidivism rate at the Nashville, TN, site was 15 percent the first year and 5.9 percent the second year.

- ◆ Project CRAFT also has been successful in providing long-term followup for juvenile offenders after release and community placement. This helps ensure the adjustment and stability of these offenders after they return to their communities.

Project CRAFT is demonstrating its effectiveness in working with a range of juvenile and adult corrections systems, including those operated by private organizations under contracts with State and local governments, State and local government-operated facilities, and community corrections systems.

## For Further Information

For additional information on the Project CRAFT program, contact:

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To obtain copies of publications from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, contact:

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse  
800-638-8736; 301-519-5212 (fax)  
puborder@ncjrs.org (e-mail)  
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