

## **ABSTRACT**

A record number of 500,000 offenders will return to their communities in 2001, with juvenile offenders representing an important segment of this reentry group. Without structured aftercare supervision and services, youth offenders reentering their communities may relapse, commit crimes, and return to confinement in either juvenile or adult correctional facilities. Evidence shows that active intervention for young offenders can help raise employment and decrease crime and recidivism, reducing their costs to society.

As a result, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Justice funded 14 local demonstration projects in Program Year 1998 which were designed to assist youth at risk of criminal involvement, youth offenders, and gang members ages 14 through 24 into long-term employment at wages that prevent future dependency and break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency. This process evaluation provides an interim assessment of the implementation process undertaken by each project and determines the extent to which each was effective in building upon existing programs and systems to serve targeted youth.

# Interim Report: Youth Offender Demonstration Project's Process Evaluation



---

Research and Evaluation Report Series 01-

U.S. Department of Labor  
Elaine L. Chao, Secretary

Office of Policy and Research  
Gerard F. Fiala, Administrator

2001



**INTERIM REPORT  
FOR  
THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
YOUTH OFFENDER DEMONSTRATION PROJECT  
PROCESS EVALUATION**

Contract No. U-6824-8-00-80-30  
Task No. 3

March 9, 2001

Submitted to

Mr. David E. Balducchi  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration  
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20210

Submitted by

**Research and Evaluation Associates, Inc.**

6320 Quadrangle Drive, Suite 180  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
(919) 493-1661



## PREFACE

Crime policies in the United States have resulted in record numbers of offenders being incarcerated – some 1.2 million offenders currently reside in prisons and another 600,000 offenders are incarcerated in local jails. A record number of 500,000 offenders will return to their communities in 2001. Juvenile offenders represent an important segment of this reentry group. Juveniles were involved in 17 percent of all violent crimes and 35 percent of all property crime arrests in 1997. Without structured aftercare supervision and services, youth offenders reentering their communities may relapse, commit crimes, and return to confinement in either juvenile or adult correctional facilities. Evidence shows that active intervention for young offenders can help raise employment and decrease crime and recidivism, reducing their costs to society.

A healthy business climate and initiatives by states, under the Workforce Investment Act, to develop a modern, national workforce development network of local One-Stop centers, led Congress to turn to the employment challenges faced by youth offenders. Initiated by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) and supported by the Department of Labor (DOL), pilot programs were funded in local areas of high poverty to address the needs of youth who are, have been, or are at risk of coming under juvenile justice supervision.

Beginning in Program Year 1998, DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) collaborated with the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, to use \$13.1 million to support 14 local demonstration projects. The projects were designed to assist youth at risk of criminal involvement, youth offenders and gang members ages 14 through 24 into long-term employment at wages that prevent future dependency and break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency. In essence, the projects tested advanced ways to help youth offenders get jobs by linking juvenile justice and youth development, training, and labor exchange activities with local One-Stop centers. In subsequent years, additional ETA funds have been provided to initiate similar youth offender projects in other local areas.

This process evaluation report, Interim Report for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project, is confined to the initial demonstration projects. It provides an interim assessment of the implementation process undertaken by each project and determines the extent to which each was effective in building upon existing programs and systems to serve targeted youth. Research and Evaluation Associates, Inc. of Chapel Hill, NC is the research contractor. The final evaluation report is scheduled for Fall 2001.

As the interim findings indicate:

- Partnerships between youth offender agencies and workforce development agencies are an important connection for furthering each agency's mission;
- The partnerships are likely to continue and the demonstration was the instrument for this breakthrough;
- Youth indicated that the promise of jobs at a decent wage is what drew them to the local programs and it is what kept them engaged with them;

- Use of a crime prevention model that includes employment, training and placement services seems critical for these youth;
- Probation officers concurred that assistance with the transition to employment was an important feature that led them to refer youth to the local programs; and
- At this junction of the projects' history, it may take additional time to demonstrate that an investment in education and training will result in more youth offenders, or youth at risk of criminal involvement, transitioning to full time employment successfully.

The interim findings in this report may be useful to policy makers and program administrations who are considering the development of comparable youth offender reentry programs in their local areas. However, readers should be cautioned that these are preliminary findings. The final report may further contribute to our understanding and provide additional information on a workable organizational design that effectively addresses the reentry problems of youth offenders.

There are many individuals who contributed to this effort. Deserving recognition are the talented staff of Research and Evaluation, Associates, Inc, guidance of the federal Youth Offender Demonstration Team (Beverly Bachemin, Barbara DeVeaux, David Lah, Jayme Marshall, Tom Murphy, Eileen Pederson, Nancy Rose, Evan Rosenberg, Dan Ryan, Mary Vines, Allison Vitalo, and Gregg Wertz), advice and counsel of Gerri Fiala and Bob Litman, and, in particular, the dedication of state and local project operators.

David E. Balducci  
Lead, Youth Offender Demonstration Team

Stephen Wandner  
Division Director, Office of Policy and Research  
March 2001

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Congress set aside \$13.1 million in the Department of Labor's 1998 Program Year Pilot and Demonstration budget for programs to address the needs of youth who are, have been, or are at risk of coming under juvenile justice supervision. The Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) collaborated with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the Department of Justice (DOJ) and used the funds to support 14 demonstration projects. The projects were to get youth at-risk of criminal involvement, youth offenders, and gang members between 14 and 24 into long-term employment at wage levels that prevent future dependency and break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency, which contributes to recidivism and non-productive activities.

In September 1998 DOL offered SGA/DAA 98-015 to fund 14 governmental entities that had proposed Youth Offender Demonstration Projects (YODP) in one of three categories:

**C Category I - Model Community Projects** are set in high-poverty neighborhoods where comprehensive, community-wide approaches to dealing with youth already have been established. Model Community Projects included:

- (1) Denver, Colorado;
- (2) Houston, Texas;
- (3) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
- (4) Richmond, California; and
- (5) Seattle, Washington.

**C Category II - Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiatives** provide comprehensive school-to-work education and training within juvenile correctional facilities as well as follow-up services and job placement when youth leave correctional facilities and return to their home communities. The Category II sites were:

- (1) Columbus, Ohio;
- (3) Indianapolis, Indiana; and
- (2) Tallahassee, Florida;

**C Category III - Community-wide Coordination Projects** work with local youth service providers to develop linkages that strengthen the coordination of prevention and aftercare services for youth in small to medium-size cities with high poverty and high crime. Sites chosen for Category III awards in the first round were:

- (1) Clifton, New Jersey;
- (2) Bakersfield, California.
- (3) Knoxville, Tennessee;
- (4) Minneapolis, Minnesota;
- (5) Pensacola, Florida; and
- (6) Rockford, Illinois;

The projects were to operate for 24 months from the time of contract negotiation, generally from fall 1999 to fall 2001. The first six months were for planning. The remaining 18 months were for implementation.

In May 1999, Research and Evaluation Associates received a task order from DOL/ETA to provide a process evaluation of 12 of the 14 sites. Two Category II sites, Tallahassee and Indianapolis, were to be evaluated under a DOJ contract.

The process evaluation for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project is an implementation study. During the evaluation, Research and Evaluation Associates was to assess the implementation process undertaken by each project and to determine the extent to which each was effective in building upon existing programs and systems to serve the target populations.

The social-development strategy assumed by the design of the Youth Offender Demonstration Projects is based on understanding the concepts of risk and protective factors. Common risk factors, such as availability of drugs, lack of commitment to school, family management problems, and early academic failure are useful in predicting behavior problems. Research reveals that the more risk factors present, the greater the risk of juvenile problem behavior. Protective factors include “healthy beliefs and clear standards for productive, law-abiding behavior, and bonding with adults who adhere to these beliefs and standards.” (Steiner, 1994)

Certain questions about the demonstration projects were included with the Scope of Work for the process evaluation. The evaluation team organized the questions into 10 major questions with general and category-specific sub-questions. The 10 questions were organized in a systems- flow model based on the work of Stufflebeam (1985): **C**ontext, **I**nputs, **P**rocess, and **P**roducts (CIPP). The ordered set of questions became the Field Guide for structuring three scheduled evaluation site visits to each site. For the Interim Report, evaluators compared the original proposals, first-round site visit reports, and second-round site visit reports, analyzing the data according to the 10 questions developed for the Field Guide.

Summary lessons learned and recommendations are reported below for each category of sites.

### **Category I: Model Community Projects' Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

Category I grant awards were given to set up a combination of gang prevention and suppression projects; alternative sentencing and community service projects for youth offenders; and to support existing case management and job placement services for youth on probation or returning to the community from corrections facilities. By the time of the second site visit, the Category I projects had operated from four to 10 months.

Some generalizations can be made about the five Category I Model Community Projects:

- C All five cities had alternative sentencing options for youth in place before the YODP project was funded.
- C Category I sites reported that the YODP funding fit their vision for the youth of their city, and to some extent, the cities saw the funding as fungible.
- C Not all cities understood the requirements of the demonstration grants. Some communities did not appreciate the need to incorporate all aspects of the demonstration nor the importance of project-specific data gathering.
- C Gang activity meant different things in different communities, but all had significant gang activity in the target neighborhoods. The gangs in some communities are local and territorially based. In others, the gangs formed around particular kinds of criminal activity or were part of an inter-state gang network.
- C The economy where the Category I sites are located is strong and diversified. There is a strong demand for entry-level workers.
- C Political support for the project in all five communities is good.

Lessons learned so far in studying the Category I sites are:

- C Youth crime drew attention to the target neighborhoods, but the issues are deeper. The youth from these neighborhoods are leaving school before high school graduation and before achieving the minimum skills for obtaining career-oriented work at livable wages. An ongoing tension within the projects has been the need and desire of both partners and clients to move youth into the kind of work positions envisioned by the demonstration and the inadequacy of academic preparation for such work. The youth also bring to the project myriad life and work readiness skill needs. The time required to build relationships with the youth adds to the tension between supporting youth and moving them toward work.



- Several sites, however, found that when they sent youth to work places quickly, they soon lost their jobs.
- C Communities that received Category I funds already had demonstrated a commitment to youth employment through other grant activities, yet the connection between youth offender agencies and youth employment agencies was new. The partnerships are likely to continue and the demonstration was the instrument for this breakthrough.
  - C Because cities had other youth employment programs in place, many partners knew each other and had worked with each other. This was an important building block for the Youth Offender Demonstration Projects. These other grants established youth employment as an important issue for the cities. The demonstration projects built on this base.
  - C The timing of the demonstration takes advantage of the long period of economic growth. The demonstration provides a window of opportunity for workers who have been court-involved to find jobs. Should these workers develop a reliable work record, they have a good chance of making a living their whole work life.
  - C All projects learned as they operated. The two partnerships that were realigned in significant ways taught something about how to make the integrated services model work.
  - C One surprise in the demonstrations has been the large number of younger youth recruited into the program. The importance of recommending to employers youth who have completed high school or GED training focused project attention on keeping youth in school. This was easier than trying to make up course work later. Project partners are concerned, however, they lack time to demonstrate the effectiveness of the youth offender employment intervention when the enrolled youth are several years from being expected to assume full-time employment.
  - C All projects included partners or collaborators representing the major actors in the Youth Offender Demonstration model. These included: Employment and Training, Alternative Sentencing, Aftercare for Youth Returning from Incarceration, and Gang Prevention Initiatives. The projects have emphasized employment training along with community service activities as a component. Aftercare is provided through the employment training, case management and support services. Anti-gang measures are indirect in that the projects view preparation for a job with good wages as deterrents to gang membership. Staffs reported that they often did not know if clients were gang members.
  - C As the projects developed, the importance of local schools has emerged more strongly. Schools, however, have proved difficult to bring into operating partnership with the community-based and employment and training organizations.
  - C None of the projects involved the youth and their parents/caregivers in the design of the projects. Two projects, however, have developed activities that engage families.

- C Three of five Category I sites were slow to move from the planning to the implementation phase. The sites appear to have needed greater clarification of expectations and fairly intensive technical assistance early on to develop a practical and strategic implementation plan that addressed each site's local barriers, including political ones.
- C All projects struggled with clarifying partners' roles and developing a common project vision. It appears that the sites needed technical assistance to help them with internal operations earlier in the demonstration.
- C Category I projects are led by staff with both interest and experience in youth employment, youth development, and/or juvenile justice. The younger, newly hired front-line workers seemed hard to keep on the project in several sites. The projects' short duration was offered as an explanation of why staff members left for more secure employment.
- C Most projects planned for services to be delivered serially. Work readiness and life skills are offered after-school and at a different facility from the educational component, whether that is high school or GED preparation classes. The model of integrating work experience with career exploration is virtually absent. Once youth are assigned to work experience or educational programs, even part time, it is hard to “wrap other services around” these other commitments. The opportunities for developing broader career awareness through job shadowing and internships seemed rare in many of the projects.
- C Projects struggled with demonstrating success, especially when clients were not ready or able to enter the workforce. Project staffs wish there were other measurable and acceptable benchmarks that demonstrate progress before youth are employed full time. Benchmarks, for example, could include: increasing dependability in participating in project activities; remaining free of further convictions; passing part or all of the GED examinations; being able to keep a part-time job; or making acceptable progress (credits earned) toward a diploma.
- C The projects were slow to develop project-specific databases, even though each partner collects data and reports them to someone. Several communities are changing their employment and training databases to accommodate the new Workforce Investment Act (WIA) activities. These might, in time, produce documentation of project efforts.
- C Youth appeared to understand the importance of getting jobs. The promise of help in finding steady work at good wages attracts and keeps many youth in the projects.

Category I: Model Community Recommendations

1. Projects need to have working relationships with key leaders in the courts and schools who will become engaged in the employment and training, aftercare, community service, and gang-prevention strategies.

2. Projects need to include youth and families in project planning and activities.
3. Projects need to demonstrate a clear lead agency and provide in their budget for that agency to remain involved with the project partners and their activities.
4. Project agencies need to have some experience with pilot projects or be able to demonstrate an understanding of the particular requirements of a demonstration grant.
5. Projects need to have a practical understanding of the population they work with and demonstrate in planning and budgeting what it takes to transition these youth into full time employment.
6. Projects need to work with technical assistance specialists early in their planning to clarify roles, cross-agency responsibilities, and development of an effective implementation plan.
7. Projects need to experiment with alternative ways to enrich the career development aspects of the youth employment and training.
8. Projects need to develop management information systems that allow them to document the outcomes of the YODP efforts.

## **Category II: Education and Training for Youth Offender Initiatives Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

Category II Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiative projects were designed to provide comprehensive school-to-work (STW) education and training within juvenile correctional facilities. The projects also were designed to provide aftercare services and job placements as youth leave these facilities and return to their communities. Category II is represented in the Research and Evaluation Associates evaluation project only by the Ohio site. The Ohio project, however, comprises two youth offender correctional facilities that differ significantly: Mohican Youth Center is for older youth who have both criminal and substance abuse problems; the Youth Development Center is for younger youth who have committed less-serious offenses.

The Ohio Department of Youth Services submitted its project with the intention of developing strong STW programs in two correctional facilities and supporting the youths' transition back to their communities with model aftercare service programs. The ultimate goal was to reduce recidivism.

The project was to target Cuyahoga County youth primarily from two main cities, Cleveland and East Cleveland. The school dropout rate in these communities is 58 percent and 50 percent respectively. Youth offenders typically are from poor, single-headed households without a member gainfully employed, have substance abuse problems, and have failed in school. The youth were characterized

as lacking involvement in sports, church, or other constructive activities. Instruction in the facilities began in spring 2000 and the first youth to return to the community occurred in June 2000. Youth enter and leave the facilities, depending on their sentence rather than in relation to completing the training program.

Lessons learned so far from studying the implementation of the Ohio Category II site are:

- C The projects are developing a transition process between the youth correctional facilities and the home communities of youth from Cuyahoga County. Each of the facilities is setting up a three-month plan for each youth returning to Cuyahoga County. There also is increased communication between the aftercare specialists at the county Department of Treatment Services and the staff at the residential facilities.
- C Transition back to Cuyahoga County began in June 2000, but it was August 2000 before there were more than a handful of youth released to the county. Some aspects of the transition are not in place or are not yet operating smoothly.
- C After returning to Cuyahoga County, youth receive more intense aftercare than had previously been the case. Both aftercare specialists and case managers of community-based organizations monitor the youth.
- C Staff at the county's Department of Justice Affairs and the regional Ohio Department of Youth Services have developed a cooperative relationship that did not exist before the project. Together the county and state agencies have developed the Relapse Prevention Program to serve both younger and the older youth. Both staffs now use a common risk-assessment instrument.
- C Mohican Youth Center (MYC) has a strong tracking system. After youth are released other service providers keep separate records. The Youth Development Center (YDC) does not have a strong MIS system, which impedes tracking the youth.
- C Youth are not finding jobs in the Information Technology (IT) occupations for which they were being trained. Most youth are younger than most workforce participants. They lack the academic skills to exploit the IT skills they learn.

Category II: Education and Training for Youth Offender Initiatives Recommendations

1. The Ohio site is comprised of two projects, different in design and different in target population. They should be considered as two separate sites.
2. The projects need to develop a project-specific database, if evaluation outcomes are to be examined and assessed.

3. Youth can become disengaged from the project once probation is completed. It might help if there were an incentive system to keep them connected to services and treatment interventions.
4. Since youth are not finding jobs in IT positions, partner agencies could find them more volunteer or community service positions that would employ what they have learned until they are better prepared for more challenging work or personal activities that require IT skills.
5. Although the Ohio project is committed to developing IT skills that will be important in any industry they enter, Ohio might explore other STW programs that prepare youth for industries that pay good wages as well. These include, for example, laying fiber optic cable.
6. Although the partnership has increased communication among agencies offering services to the same target population, several communication issues still need to be addressed. An important issue is aligning the IT curriculum in Cuyahoga County with the IT curriculum of the two facilities.
7. Category II projects require the development of operating partnerships, especially when youth are being released back to their community. The projects are thus experiencing all the relationship-building issues during the second year of the grant that projects in other categories addressed months earlier. The projects need technical assistance in communication, role definition, and operating procedures and styles.
8. Most youth are younger than most workforce participants. It will be several years before project designers can evaluate the project's impact on the kind of jobs the youth will be able to obtain when they become age-eligible. The projects need interim benchmarks of progress until employment outcomes become more feasible.

### **Category III: Community-wide Coordination Projects' Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

Category III grants were awarded to focus on high poverty and high crime areas in medium-sized cities. The design was for grantees to work with youth service providers to develop linkages that strengthen the coordination of prevention and recovery services for youth offenders. Grantees were:

- C to build upon existing employment and training, recreation, conflict resolution, and other youth crime and gang prevention programs;
- C to establish alternative sentencing and community service options for youth offenders, especially those who have been gang members; and
- C to establish or continue gang suppression activities.

Lessons learned studying the Category III sites so far indicate that implementing a successful project requires:

- C A clear vision. The most successful Category III projects were those that were well conceived and based on sound theoretical grounds. The projects reinforced the need for adherence to practices and principles that have been shown to reduce youth delinquency and crime while developing the potential of youth to lead happy and productive lives.
- C Broad community support. The most successful Category III sites sought broad community involvement in the projects. They did this by nurturing and strengthening existing partnerships and by building new ones with public, private, and non-profit organizations. Organizations that were well established and had strong partnerships in place were more successful than those that had to build them from the ground up.
- C Shared leadership. The most successful Category III projects shared both the leadership and credit for the project with partners. Those that did not were unable to build and maintain momentum for the projects.
- C An ability to deliver benefits to clients. The most successful projects were those that stressed service delivery by enhancing and establishing linkages and partnerships with other agencies and organizations. In addition, the study appeared to indicate the necessity of having facilities situated near target groups.
- C A committed staff. A highly motivated and dedicated staff, whether green or seasoned, is an important asset and magnifies a project's efforts to serve clients. Staffs at Category III sites generally displayed a commitment to their jobs and to serving client needs.
- C Specialized technical assistance (TA). The sites found technical assistance helpful, useful, and necessary. TA is essential if projects are to remain on track and receive help when they encounter barriers. TA also may enhance a project's ability to become sustainable, after grant funding ends.

In addition, several barriers and challenges appear to have affected the effectiveness of the projects. These lessons learned included:

- C A lack of stable funding commitments. Even sites that appeared to be the most financially viable, and had the greatest chances of being sustained, feared they would be unable to find additional funding once the grant ends. From the beginning, projects need to understand the importance of seeking TA to help them learn ways to secure funding streams that will ensure that the projects are sustained in the future.
- C Confusion about measures of success. All six Category III sites were unclear or confused about how evaluators would measure their efforts and determine whether they were successful. The sites, in general, assumed they would be evaluated on their ability to place clients in jobs, rather than on their ability to develop and enhance linkages and

partnerships. In the future, projects must understand clearly their responsibilities required by a grant. Additional on-site TA may help ensure that projects remain on track and focus on primary tasks.

- C A lack of a uniform reporting system. The projects operated without uniform reporting systems. Although all maintained records, the reports that each submitted provided data in different formats. In addition, reports did not uniformly classify participants according to services they received, demographic information, status in the project, or other information that helps determine project performance and whether the project meets expectations, goals, and objectives. In the future, reporting requirements for projects should be established and specified clearly.

### Category III: Community-wide Coordination Projects Recommendations

1. Projects should focus more on developing community-wide partnerships, rather than on providing employment services directly. Not only does the demonstration project grant require this, but it also is a primary means for projects to become sustainable after grant funding ends. Building and enhancing partnerships also will ensure that gaps in services provided to clients are filled.
2. Projects should give special attention to strengthening partnerships with the Juvenile Justice System. The projects must better educate prosecutors, judges, and probation officers that their projects can serve as important tools in community efforts to reduce youthful crime and recidivism.
3. Projects should increase their knowledge of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the opportunities it provides youth. Projects must learn that One-Stop Centers and closer involvement of Youth Councils can help them deliver services to target populations more effectively. In addition, closer involvement with Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) may help projects secure funding to ensure sustainability after the grant ends.

### **Closing**

Over and over again, youth interviewed during the evaluation site visits mentioned that the promise of jobs at a decent wage is what drew them to the project and keeps them engaged with it. Use of a model of crime prevention that includes employment training and placement seems critical for these youth. Probation officers concurred that assistance with the transition to employment was an important feature that led them to refer youth to the YODP project. At this juncture in the projects' history, the limiting factor is the time it might take to demonstrate that an investment in education and training will result in more youth offenders, or youth at risk of criminal involvement, transitioning to full-time employment successfully.

**Table of Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	i
LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background .....	1
Methodology .....	2
Theoretical Basis for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project .....	5
Organization of Report .....	7
II. CATEGORY I - MODEL COMMUNITY PROJECTS .....	9
Introduction .....	9
Findings .....	11
Planning for the Project .....	12
Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships .....	13
Organizational Issues .....	16
Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities .....	18
Collateral Services .....	23
Target Population Recruitment .....	25
Technical Assistance .....	26
Sustainability .....	28
Lessons Learned From Category I Sites .....	29
Choice of Sites .....	30
The Organization of Youth Offender Demonstration Project .....	31
Delivery of Services .....	33
Preliminary Conclusions for Model Communities Projects .....	35
Choice of Sites .....	35
The Organization of Youth Offender Demonstration Project .....	36
Delivery of Services .....	36
Recommendations .....	37
Summary .....	37
III. CATEGORY II - EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH OFFENDERS INITIATIVE .....	39
Introduction .....	39
Findings .....	40
Planning for the Project .....	40



Establishing Effective Linkages and Partnerships . . . . . 41  
Organizational Issues . . . . . 42

**Table of Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Training and Employment Activities . . . . .	43
Collateral Services . . . . .	48
Staff Recruitment . . . . .	48
Target Population Recruitment . . . . .	49
Technical Assistance . . . . .	50
Sustainability . . . . .	50
Lessons Learned . . . . .	51
Conclusions and Recommendations . . . . .	51
<b>IV. FINDINGS, CATEGORY III - COMMUNITY-WIDE COORDINATION PROJECTS . . . . .</b>	<b>53</b>
Introduction . . . . .	53
Findings . . . . .	54
Planning for the Project . . . . .	54
Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships . . . . .	55
Organizational Issues . . . . .	59
Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities . . . . .	59
Collateral Services . . . . .	61
Staff Recruitment . . . . .	61
Target Population Recruitment . . . . .	63
Technical Assistance . . . . .	65
Sustainability . . . . .	65
Lessons Learned . . . . .	67
Factors Contributing to Success . . . . .	67
Clear Vision for Project . . . . .	68
Broad Community Support . . . . .	69
Shared Leadership . . . . .	69
Ability to Deliver Benefits to Clients . . . . .	70
Committed Staff . . . . .	71
Specialized Technical Assistance . . . . .	72
Organizational Barriers and Challenges . . . . .	72
Lack of Funding Commitments . . . . .	73
Confusion About Measures of Success . . . . .	74
Lack of Uniform Reporting System . . . . .	76
Recommendations, Category III . . . . .	74
Summary . . . . .	76

REFERENCES ..... 77  
APPENDIX A - Scope of Work ..... A-1  
APPENDIX B - Evaluation Questions ..... B-1  
APPENDIX C- Category I Interim Report Summaries ..... C-1  
APPENDIX D - Category III Interim Report Summaries ..... D-1

**List of Tables**

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites .....	4
2. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category II Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites .....	4
3. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category III Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites .....	5
4. Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Sites and Local Names .....	9
5. Funded Partners in the Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Sites .....	12
6. Collaborators in the Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Projects .....	85
7. Work Readiness Services and Providers in the Youth Offender Category I Sites .....	19
8. Work Development and Placement Process for Youth Offender Category I Sites .....	20
9. Current Status of Clients, Category I Sites .....	22
10. Sources of Youth Clients in the Model Communities Youth Offender Demonstration Project .....	25
11. Technical Assistance Provided to Category I Model Communities Projects .....	27
12. Current Status of Clients, Category II Sites .....	86
13. Planning for YODP Grants, Category III Sites .....	87
14. Service Providers in Category III Sites .....	58
15. Status of Clients, Category III Sites .....	88
16. Demographics of YODP Participants, Category III Sites .....	89
17. On-Site Technical Assistance Provided to Category III Sites .....	90

## **Section I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background**

Congress set aside \$13.1 million in the Department of Labor's 1998 Program Year Pilot and Demonstration budget for programs to address the needs of youth who are, have been, or are at risk of coming under criminal justice supervision. The Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) collaborated with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the Department of Justice (DOJ) and used the funds to support 14 demonstration projects. The projects were to get youth at risk of criminal involvement, youth offenders, and gang members between the ages of 14 and 24 into long-term employment at wage levels that prevent future dependency and break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency, which contributes to recidivism and non-productive activities.

In September 1998 DOL announced SGA/DAA 98-015 to fund 14 grantees that had proposed Youth Offender Demonstration Projects in one of three categories:

- C Category I – Model Community Projects** are set in high-poverty neighborhoods where comprehensive, community-wide approaches to dealing with youth have been established. The Model Community Projects included:

- (1) Denver, Colorado;
- (2) Houston, Texas;
- (3) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
- (4) Richmond, California; and
- (5) Seattle, Washington.

- C Category II - Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiatives** provide comprehensive school-to-work education and training within juvenile correctional facilities as well as aftercare services and job placement when youth leave correctional facilities and return to their home communities. The Category II grantees were based in:

- (1) Columbus, Ohio;
- (2) Indianapolis, Indiana; and

(3) Tallahassee, Florida.

**C Category III – Community-wide Coordination Projects** work with local youth service providers to develop linkages that strengthen the coordination of prevention and aftercare services for youth offenders in small to medium-sized cities with high poverty and high crime. The sites chosen for Category III awards included:

- (1) Bakersfield, California;
- (2) Clifton, New Jersey;
- (3) Knoxville, Tennessee;
- (4) Minneapolis, Minnesota;
- (5) Pensacola, Florida; and
- (6) Rockford, Illinois.

The projects were to operate for 24 months from the time of contract negotiation, generally from fall 1999 to fall 2001. The first six months were for planning, and the remaining 18 months were for implementation.

The process evaluation for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project is an implementation study in support of the Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration Youth Demonstration Project in 12 of the 14 sites. Two sites in Category II are being evaluated by another contractor with funding from the OJJDP.

The goal of the process evaluation is to document the achievements and challenges the sites faced while delivering integrated services to the target population. It also is to report the extent to which the sites were able to transition youth offenders and youth at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system to full-time employment at livable wages in positions with career potential.

## **Methodology**

Certain questions about the demonstration projects were included with the Scope of Work for the process evaluation. (See Appendix A for the Scope of Work.) Some questions applied to the entire set of demonstration sites while others were specific to one category of sites. The evaluation team organized the questions into 10 major questions with general and category-specific sub-questions. (See Appendix B for the full set of evaluation questions.) The major questions for evaluating the Youth Offender Demonstration Projects were:

1. What are the characteristics of the community context of the project and how did they impact the project development and implementation?
2. How did the community planning bodies or councils charged with the ongoing task of designing the integrated network of services function and what was the level of involvement and satisfaction of the stakeholders, including the parents and youth?
3. What was the original plan for developing and enhancing partnerships, linkages, relationships and coordination, including building on existing systems and establishing new services, both core and collateral services?
4. What program components were implemented and how successful were the efforts to build on existing systems, establish new programs, and create an integrated network?
5. How was the location of facilities determined and what role did location play in facilitating the outreach efforts to gain access to and recruit the target population as program participants?
6. What methods of staff recruitment and training were used and how successful were they?
7. What methods were used to gain access to and recruit members of the target population as program participants and how successful were they?
8. What types of training, employment, and gang suppression programs were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?
9. What types of collateral services were provided to the target population? What were the intensity, duration, fidelity and quality of these programs (including the degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target population, the difference from traditional approaches, and the outcomes realized)?
10. What steps have been taken to assure the continuation of the integrated services and activities after the project funding ends and what is the likelihood of success?

The 10 questions were organized in a systems-flow model based on the work of Stufflebeam (1985): **C**ontext, **I**nputs, **P**rocess, and **P**roducts (CIPP). The ordered set of questions became the Field Guide for structuring evaluation site visits to each site. Since the roles of partners differed, depending on the site, the 10 questions shaped the direction of interviews.

Three visits were scheduled for each site of the 12 projects based on the scope of work. The first site visits occurred in December of 1999 and served to test the field guide and gather baseline data. After the first site visit reports were reviewed by the Department of Labor, the remainder of the site visits to Category I and III sites were scheduled for February and March 2000. The Category II sites were not

visited until it was decided which of the sites would be evaluated under a Department of Justice contract. The Ohio site remained in the Research and Evaluation Associates evaluation set, and it was visited in May 2000. Summaries of these site visit reports were delivered to the Department of Labor. (See Tables 1-3 for the site visit schedules.)

**Table 1. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites**

<b>Denver, CO</b>	<b>Houston, TX</b>	<b>Philadelphia, PA</b>	<b>Richmond, CA</b>	<b>Seattle, WA</b>
December 1-2, 1999	February 15-16, 2000	February 24-25, 2000	March 16-17, 2000	February 14-15, 2000
October 3-4, 2000	September 26- 27, 2000	October 10-11, 2000	October 5-6, 2000	October 17-18, 2000

**Table 2. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category II Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites**

<b>Columbus, OH</b>
May 8-9, 2000
October 16-18, 2000

**Table 3. Evaluation Visit Schedule to Category III Youth Offender Demonstration Project Sites**

<b>Bakersfield, CA</b>	<b>Clifton, NJ</b>	<b>Knoxville, TN</b>	<b>Minneapolis, MN</b>	<b>Pensacola, FL</b>	<b>Rockford, IL</b>
January 13-14, 2000	January 10-11, 2000	November 22-23, 1999	January 18-19, 2000	January 18-19, 2000	January 5-6, 2000
October 5-6, 2000	September 26-27, 2000	October 2-3, 2000	October 10-11, 2000	September 25-26, 2000	September 19-20, 2000

During site visits, evaluators interviewed key project staff members and partners who provided basic, collateral, educational, vocational, and other training. Evaluators attended, when possible, project advisory board meetings. They also observed training and talked to project clients. In addition, evaluators collected information about each project, conducted records reviews to determine the kinds

and duration of services clients received, including educational and vocational training, personal and family counseling, and collateral services. Site visit reports were prepared, organized according to the 10 evaluation questions.

The second round of evaluation visits was scheduled for after Labor Day in September and October 2000. By this time, if the planned schedule had been maintained, the sites would have had a demonstration project with about 10 months of operating experience.

After the second evaluation visits, evaluators prepared an Interim Report. For the report, evaluators compared the original proposals, first-round site visit reports, and second-round site visit reports. They analyzed data for the 10 questions developed for the Field Guide. (The reports of each Category I site are included in Appendix C of this Interim Report; the report for the one Category II site is embedded in the report, and the reports of each Category III site are included in Appendix D.)

## **Theoretical Basis for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project**

The social development strategy assumed by the design of the Youth Offender Demonstration Projects is based on understanding the concepts of risk and protective factors. James Howell (1995) noted that risk factors exist in multiple domains (community, family, school, individual/peer) and that common risk factors, such as availability of drugs, lack of commitment to school, family management problems, and early academic failure, are useful in predicting diverse behavior problems. Research reveals that the more risk factors present, the greater the risk of juvenile problem behavior. Further, risk factors have consistent effects across different races and cultures.

Protective factors can help buffer exposure to risks. Protective factors include “healthy beliefs and clear standards for productive, law-abiding behavior, and bonding with adults who adhere to these beliefs and standards” (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1994). Researchers (Benson, Galbraith, Espeland, 1995) analyzed the survey results of more than 270,000 young people in 600 communities across the United States and found that the difference between troubled teens and those leading healthy, productive, and positive lives was strongly affected by the presence of “developmental assets.” The more developmental assets the young people have (such as family support, self-esteem, and hope) the less likely they are to use alcohol and other drugs, engage in premarital sex, and exhibit other problem behaviors.

Delinquency prevention and intervention strategies in reducing juvenile crime show positive benefits when they are based on theory-driven prevention practices. When they have knowledge about the risk factors that confront youth, communities can develop and implement effective prevention and intervention programs to strengthen community institutions and buffer children from the effects of the identified risk factors.

Promising approaches in delinquency prevention, intervention, and treatment have resulted in the development of key principles and a comprehensive strategy for preventing and reducing adolescent problem behavior. The strategy includes:



- C strengthening families in their role of providing guidance and discipline, and instilling sound values as their children's first and primary teachers;
- C supporting core social institutions, including schools, churches, and other community-organizations, to alleviate risk factors and help children develop to their maximum potential; and
- C promoting prevention strategies that reduce the impact of risk factors and enhance the influence of protective factors in the lives of youth at great risk of delinquency.

The emerging professional consensus is that communities need comprehensive strategies or models to combat youth crime, reduce recidivism and gang involvement, and assist youth to secure employment at livable wage levels. The Youth Offender Demonstration Project provides communities with a theory-driven, research-based prevention framework; the tools, training, and technical assistance needed to bring community members together to build on that framework. It also provides for local control of program planning and implementation. This process and grant funding enable communities to design and implement comprehensive programming for the targeted population.

The following issue areas are important components of the demonstration model and provide the framework for planning and developing programming for youth.

1. **Community-wide Collaboration.** The Youth Offender Demonstration Program is changing ways of thinking about youth program planning. Representatives from a variety of community sectors, including workforce development boards, courts, schools, police, healthcare, human services, and community organizations, are now working together and observing first-hand how prevention and intervention efforts can be implemented successfully. The approach is the coordination piece that helps drive a better application of resources and reduce duplication of effort that often occurs within human services. Collaboration, no doubt, promotes service integration.
2. **Employment and Training.** Schools and communities need to view the school dropout problem from both prevention and intervention perspectives. Intervention approaches can use regular or alternative schools, or develop ties to the business community to provide academic or job training that addresses the needs and interests of students. These programs provide students not only with a high school diploma, but also a certificate of achievement for learning a skill or trade that helps them gain entry to employment after school.

Court- and gang-involved youth, or youth at risk of such involvement, often are disenfranchised by the educational system and find it difficult to learn marketable skills or compete for jobs. Yet research demonstrates that employability is critical to the success of youth who are at risk for delinquent acts. The project recognizes the link between crime and lack of economic opportunity. It also requires concerted attention through collaboration between employers, the juvenile justice establishment, and the workforce development system.

3. **Alternative Sentencing and Community Service.** A justice system based on the balanced approach differs from traditional systems in that competency development, accountability, and

community protection objectives provide clear outcomes directed at the offender, the victim, and the community. All three components should receive balanced attention and gain tangible benefits from their interaction with the justice system. Bazemore and Umbreit's Balanced and Restorative Justice model (1994) stresses that offenders should leave the justice system capable of being productive and responsible citizens; victims and communities should have their losses restored, and should be empowered as active participants in the juvenile justice process; and the justice system must protect society by providing a range of intervention alternatives (mostly community-based) geared to the varying risks presented by offenders.

4. **Gang Initiatives.** The underlying assumption of the Spergel Model (1999) is that gang problems are largely a response to community social disorganization, where key social institutions such as schools, family, police, and businesses are unable to address the problem collaboratively. The key idea of the model is to have organizations and representatives of local communities join forces to engage and control the behavior of young gang members, and encourage them to participate in legitimate societal activities.
  
5. **Aftercare for Youth Returning from Detention.** David Altschuler (1998) and other researchers theorize that if juvenile offenders receive intensive intervention while they are incarcerated, during their transition back to the community, and when they are under community supervision, they would benefit in areas such as family and peer relations, education, employment, substance abuse, mental health, and recidivism. The Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) model stresses collaboration among the juvenile justice system, probation and parole, and community-based service providers to address the specific needs of youth offenders.

## **Organization of Report**

The remainder of the Interim Report considers the three categories of demonstration projects. The sections are based upon evaluation site visits made by Research and Evaluation Associates evaluators. In addition to an introduction, each of the three sections highlights and discusses areas of interest that are organized around three key areas. These include:

- findings;
  
- lessons learned; and
  
- recommendations.



**Section II**

**CATEGORY I - MODEL COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

**Introduction**

The solicitation for the Youth Offender Demonstration Projects grants described the Category I, Model Community Projects, as grants for “comprehensive, community-wide approaches to dealing with youth which have already been established.” Grant awards were given to “set up a combination of gang prevention and suppression projects; alternative sentencing and community service projects for youth offenders; to support existing case management and job placement services for youth on probation or returning to the community from correction facilities. These neighborhood-wide projects will then serve as models for other high-poverty, high-crime communities in the country.” The Category I model commits the communities to demonstrating the effectiveness of a comprehensive, integrated approach to preventing youth involvement with the juvenile justice system and to intervening with youth who have been court-involved to prevent relapse and to provide for a secure and constructive future.

Table 4 lists the names that the five Model Community Youth Offender Demonstration Project teams dubbed their projects. Although Denver did not give a unique name to its program, the term “youth offender” or “youth-at-risk” is never used. The case managers are called youth development specialists, and the program is explained to the clients in youth development terms.

**Table 4. Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Sites and Local Names**

<b>Denver</b>	<b>Houston</b>	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>Richmond</b>	<b>Seattle</b>
Youth Offender Demonstration Project	U-Turn	Learn and Earn	Youth Economic Employment Service (YEES)	New Start

Some general considerations about Category I sites are:

- C All five cities had alternative sentencing options for youth in place before the YODP project was funded. In some cities, the sentence may have meant returning to school as a condition of probation (Philadelphia), community service and restitution (Denver, Richmond, Seattle), or be specified by the court (Houston). Training youth offenders with the specific goal of preparing them for the workforce was an innovation in the care of youth offenders. The demonstrations offered the cities some experience with youth employment processes for difficult-to-place youth.

- C The Category I sites reported that funding for YODP fit their vision for the youth of their city. And, to some extent, the cities saw the funding as a way to strengthen and supplement existing programs. Denver had a Youth Opportunities grant that was bringing employment and training services to some neighborhoods along the Platte River where poverty and crime rates were high and high school graduation rates were low. Houston had Youth Opportunities funds for several troubled neighborhoods that abut the prosperous downtown, and YODP added funding for several more of these neighborhoods. The School District of Philadelphia wanted to offer alternative forms of schooling for project clients in all of its 22 comprehensive high schools. The demonstration grant allowed four target high schools to offer one Transitional Opportunities Promoting Success (TOPS) for youth at risk of dropping out or involved with juvenile justice and one Twilite program, which provides educational and employment opportunities for older youth offenders returning to the community from residential facilities. Richmond had received a Safe Futures grant to target gang activity, but African-American youth, who did not use tattoos and clothing as gang markers, were not included in its services. Seattle had a Safe Futures grant that was operating successfully in West Seattle, but its coverage did not extend to the White Center region and the area around the Town of Burien.
  
- C As welcome and as needed as the YODP funding was, not all cities appreciated the nature of a demonstration grant. Their perceived needs of local youth were more important than the requirements of implementing key features of the demonstration. It was through coaxing and coaching that the sites addressed the elements listed in the SGA, such as giving sufficient attention to gang issues or to adjudicated youth rather than neighborhood or school district youth in general. A fundamental outcome of this orientation has been the problem of evaluating project outcomes because of the paucity of data gathered from the various partners to document the advancement of youth from one stage of the project to the other.
  
- C Gang activity means different things in different communities. In Philadelphia gang activity is generally not territorial as much as related to drug-crime activity. Denver experienced an in-migration of large well-established, multi-generational gangs from the west coast, in particular, with some local territorial youth gangs as well. Houston estimates its gang membership to be about 4,000 with 8 percent of them Hispanic; police estimate that about 90 percent of youth violence is related to gang activity. Houston has monolingual Spanish-speaking immigrant gangs, as well as gangs of American youth. The section of Seattle targeted for the project has experienced marked increases in gang-related crime and violence. Some of it is traced to drug activity, but car theft is a big part of the youth crime. Gangs in the White Center area of Seattle are predominately Asian. Hispanic gangs also are developing as Latino families move into an adjacent area. Youth seem to mature out of the gangs in West Seattle, so gangs form and reform as youth age and leave. Richmond, CA, has been addressing Asian and Hispanic youth gang activity in the southern part of the city through a Safe Futures grant. The project was to extend the effort to other parts of the city, particularly those where African-American youth reside. These youth do not use

tattoos and color gang-markers to identify themselves as do gangs in the Safe Futures target population. Consequently they were not receiving services that would benefit them.

- C The economy of the five Category I sites is strong and diversified. At some point in visiting each site, someone would say, “Getting jobs is not the problem; keeping them is.” The timing of the demonstration projects was important in that there were real opportunities for youth to get work if their skills and life issues could be brought to a constructive place for keeping work once they were able to find it.
- C There is good political support in all the communities for the YODP. In Denver and Richmond, the project is part of the Office of Employment and Training. In Houston, Philadelphia, and Seattle the project operates through workforce development corporations. All projects report that the mayors, city managers, and other government leaders are pleased to have youth employment be a focus and especially the harder-to-help group of youth offenders.

The remainder of the Category I Section is organized by:

- C Findings;
- C Lessons learned;
- C Conclusions;
- C Recommendations.

### **Findings**

The findings section of the Category I report is divided into eight sections which follow:

- C Planning for the Project;
- C Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships;
- C Organizational Issues;
- C Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities;
- C Collateral Services;
- C Target Population Recruitment;
- C Technical Assistance; and
- C Sustainability.

**Planning for the Project**

The amount of community involvement differed among the cities. In both Denver and Houston, the lead agency facilitated development of the proposal with the intended partners rather than writing the proposal themselves, as was their usual practice. A staff member of the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) wrote the proposal; and in Seattle, the planner with the local workforce development agency prepared the proposal with the partners' input and review. In Richmond two veteran partners, Youth Services Bureau (YSB) and Opportunity West (OW) wrote the proposal and negotiated with the City of Richmond to be the grant recipient. Table 5 reports the funded partners in each Model Community project.

**Table 5. Funded Partners in the Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Sites**

<b>Partners' Role</b>	<b>Denver</b>	<b>Houston</b>	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>Richmond</b>	<b>Seattle</b>
Grant Management Organization	Mayor's Office of Employment and Training (MOET)	Houston Works USA (HW)	Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (PWDC)	City of Richmond Office of Employment and Training (Richmond Works)	Seattle-King County Workforce Development Corporation (KCSWDC)
Project Management	Denver Area Youth Services (DAYS)	HW	Philadelphia Communities in Schools (CIS); now PWDC	Not clear initially, now Richmond Works	KC Work Training Program (WTP)
Case Management	DAYS	Educational Training Corporation (ETC) Gulf Coast Trades (GCT)	Family Court (FC) Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)	YSB YouthWorks Neighborhood House (NH)	Safe Futures (SF), King County Superior Court (KCSC)
Service Delivery Organizations	Denver Works (DW), Denver Workforce Initiative (DWI), Community College of Denver (CCD)	ETC, GCT	CIS, School District of Philadelphia (SDP), Safe and Sound, Opportunities Industrial Center (OIC)	YouthWorks YSB, Opportunity West (OW), CYCLE, LEAP, Police Activity League (PAL), Chamber of Commerce, International Institute of the East Bay (IIEB)	Safe Futures, Pacific Associates, Metro YMCA, KCSC

The advisory councils have been chiefly the representatives of the partnerships. In some cases, there are also representatives of collaborators. Cities were expected to involve youth and parents in the projects, but neither planning groups nor advisory councils had done that. Denver and Seattle have included families in their activities, however. Other communities are forming Youth Councils as part of the transition to the organization required by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). These councils require the inclusion of youth and families, and project staff assume that the Youth Councils will become the Advisory Councils for all youth projects.

It is worth noting that the Category I sites varied in the strength and experience of their leading partners. Denver and Houston's leading partners had experience with youth offenders; Richmond with youth development and community service activities; Philadelphia with the schools; and Seattle with employment and training and youth development. None of the YODP projects had extensive youth employment histories, although the presence of Youth Opportunities and other youth employment programs in the workforce development agencies meant that there were staff in the cities who had some knowledge of the target population and models to share.

### **Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships**

Each Community-wide Model Community project built its partnerships and linkages on existing relationships and added or enhanced its network through the Youth Offender Demonstration grants. These included:

- C In Denver, DAYS had worked with the Juvenile Court and the Probation Department for more than 20 years. The demonstration grant allowed it to add employment and training and case management through its relationships with the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training (MOET), Denver Works (DW), and the Denver Workforce Initiative (DWI).
- C In Houston, Houston Works had worked with the Educational Training Corporation (ETC) before and has added connections with the Harris County Court, Texas Youth Commission, the Probation Department, and Gulf Coast Trades (GCT).
- C In Philadelphia, the School District had worked on other projects with the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (PWDC) and PWDC had worked with Educational Data Systems Inc. (EDSI). But the configuration among the school district, PWDC, EDSI, and the city Family Court was new.
- C In Richmond, RichmondWorks had not partnered with the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) or Opportunity West (OW) before the demonstration grant, although YSB and OW had worked with each other. Added to this mix were: Neighborhood House, International Institute of the East Bay (IIEB), Community Youth Council for Leadership and Education (CYCLE), Literacy for Every Adult Project (LEAP), Police Activity League (PAL), and YouthBuild.



- C In Seattle, the King County-Seattle Workforce Development Corporation (KCSWDC) had worked with Safe Futures and Pacific Associates, but not together in one project. The addition of the King County Superior Court and the King County Work Training Program as partners also was new.

One dimension of the Youth Offender Demonstration Project that took some operating time to stabilize was determining which partner actually took responsibility for project operation. Since the project was designed, in some cases, by a group different from the submitting agency, the organization responsible for working out the relationships and operations was not initially clear. RichmondWorks assumed that YSB was the lead agency for coordination, and Philadelphia assumed that the SDP was. In both cases, as various project issues arose, it became clear that the legally responsible agencies needed to exert both leadership and management oversight to keep projects on track.

While the leadership role was clearly with KCSWDC in Seattle, the planner recalled that it took months of facilitated discussion to arrive at a common vision and common operating principles. Richmond and Philadelphia used a technical assistance consultant to work through their network of relationships and responsibilities. Denver's project manager served this role in helping the new partners to understand their place in the network. Even with well-established colleagues, the actual collaborations needed work to begin to operate smoothly. There are collaborators in every project that do not have contracts with the lead partners, and these are reported in Table 6. There are other organizations that serve as referral sources, providers of off-the-shelf services, or organizations that derive mutual benefit from the projects.

The relationships that have been most mutually beneficial have been between courts and probation officers, and employment and training agencies. The courts and probation officers report that the employment and training program gives them a new set of constructive alternatives, especially for youth who have not succeeded in school or who cannot for some reason return to school. For the employment and training agencies, probation officers give them leverage with some youth and provide services, such as anger management, mental health counseling or personal counseling, that are beyond the project to provide. For Houston, the courts pay residential costs of youth at Gulf Coast Trades while the project pays for employment training and aftercare case management. The case management all projects provide offers courts and probation officers a back-up and a more intense involvement with project youth.

Some partnering relationships did not succeed despite efforts to establish linkages. In Philadelphia the PWDC turned the grant over to the SDP, which in turn drew up a contract with Philadelphia Communities-in-Schools (CIS), a non-profit organization that provides services to the school district. CIS, in turn, contracted with EDSI for case management and other services. CIS itself tried to provide job development and work preparedness training. By the end of the first grant year, it seemed clear that EDSI, an agency that provides job development, employment training, and job placement, would be more effective with these tasks than two individuals working on their own. Safe and Sound, which had received a grant to provide recreational, cultural, and other services, had not done so by the end of the first year, and PWDC decided to retain responsibility for these activities and is attempting to

---

***Section II - Category I - Model Community Projects***

work with existing city agencies to deliver these services. CIS continues to arrange for the TOPS and Twilite classes in four high schools, and it will provide work readiness for the younger (TOPS) youth.

In Richmond, several partners had not hired the case manager, for which they contracted, by the end of the first year. RichmondWorks took over direct operation of the project and hired its own case managers and dropped two partners. Because the grant had not included funds for (see Table 6, p. 85)



RichmondWorks' staff, the second year contracts to all the partners except YSB were reduced by 20 percent to pay the salaries and benefits of the new city-funded case managers. The relationship that needs the most effort to establish is between schools and the other service providers. The School District of Philadelphia has not been resourceful in making links with other agencies that could provide services to Learn and Earn youth. On the other hand, other partnerships report that it has taken serious effort to establish a relationship with the schools in the target area or that the relationship with schools remains underdeveloped. This relationship could be as important in youth crime prevention as intensive aftercare is to relapse prevention. A recent report on the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health reviewed the 25 risk factors investigators examined for unhealthy behaviors, including substance abuse, suicide and crime (November 30,2000). They found that problems with school work was the most serious that related to these risk factors, regardless of social class, economic status, or family structure.

A relationship that also has proved difficult to develop has involved a cadre of employers who would hire the youth from the YODP projects. Several projects had discussed their undeveloped efforts to establish a network of youth employers in their proposals. Others have tried to develop such a network since the grant was funded. Denver's first job developer had been successful in identifying a number of employers willing to hire the youth, but the initial placements were not successful. The youth still lacked the maturity and work readiness skills to be reliable workers. One of the tensions in the Richmond project was that OW, which had responsibility for placing youth in subsidized employment, kept youth in city agency jobs for longer and at a higher rate of pay than the contract called for. The explanation was that the youths' skills were so low that they could not be moved to unsubsidized employment; yet their financial needs and expectations required a higher rate of pay to keep them engaged.

What Houston has found useful is sponsoring job fairs every month or so and having a major job fair in spring when in-school and other youth are looking for work. Certain employers in particular, including Marriott Hotels, United Parcel Service, and Radio Shack, are willing to take a chance on these youth. The job-loss rate remains high, however, because of the low academic and work skill levels and the lack of such life skills as anger management, perseverance, and punctuality.

### **Organizational Issues**

The Youth Offender Demonstration Projects have addressed a number of organizational issues in the first year of operation. Some of these have been alluded to already, such as: the need for leadership, experience, and the extraordinarily high needs of youth involved in the projects. Staffing and retention of staff should be added to this list.

The two projects that, in effect, turned management responsibility of the operation over to someone outside their own agency ran into serious trouble. As both agencies reported, they monitored the project and that is how the need to make changes surfaced. The projects, nevertheless, both lost time and caused a disruption of services. The projects that turned management over to an outside organization, but remained an active partner, have done well. Both Denver and Seattle project managers meet regularly with staff and monitor the relationships of the partners and facilitate conflict

management as needed. In both cases, the managers have a good perspective on the progress the projects are making and the weaknesses that they must monitor.

As several projects demonstrate, partners bring different strengths to the projects. No single partner had all the necessary knowledge, experience, and networks to make the grant work. In other words, all projects needed time and assistance in getting the pieces together. The role that project managers in Denver and Seattle played was seeing the project as a whole and investing time in the coordination and development of it. Not everyone seemed to appreciate both the need for and the cost of this coordinating role. Coordination does not have a specifically measurable outcome, such as the number of youth recruited and the number of services provided. Yet without such a project investment, the projects were the weaker.

Houston was a special case. The project was well-structured and the community had a strong resource base to support it. The receipt of an unusually large grant (Youth Opportunities), which brought \$11 million into the lead agency in the first year, distracted the organizational leadership. The lead agency also decided, after the grant award, to have a competitive process for delivering services, even though service delivery organizations had been specifically identified in the grant proposal. The sum of these factors is that the project did not begin to deliver systematic services until late in summer 2000.

Good experience is, however, an important boost for the projects. Denver's Youth Opportunities grant had given MOET opportunity to develop a process for empowerment of local organizations and development of good collaboration among them. This model was used for YODP as well. Seattle's KCSWDC has managed other demonstration grants, and it understood their nature and the expectation of sustaining new efforts after grant funding ends. Richmond, the smallest city in the group, nonetheless, has a city manager who serves on the State WIA Board for California. As a result, the city was aware of and involved in the transfer from the old Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to WIA process for employment and training. The city had, moreover, a good history of summer jobs programs and youth employability skills training. Philadelphia's PWDC also had extensive experience in welfare-to-work, and it turned to these service delivery agents when there was a need.

All projects appear dismayed by the deep and various needs of project clientele. There are staffing and budget implications of realizing that maturity, academic standing, work skills and life skills need to be developed before youth can hold jobs. Several staff remarked to evaluators that "These are the kids nobody wants." It appears this is because the youth have multiple needs that must be met before they can reliably move forward on their own. All but Seattle and Philadelphia seemed not to appreciate the difficulty in meeting the needs of youth in such a large age range, 14 to 24.

The projects dealt in different ways with youth who were not making progress on the planned timetable. Richmond reported that it will work with 300 youth to have 120 in jobs by the end of the project, so they will work with the more motivated youth. Other projects accomplished the same task by dropping youth who continually failed to show up for services. The projects, however, keep the youth on enrollment rosters. Denver case managers said that they still check in with some youth who dropped out when they have the time.

### **Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities**

The program of services planned for the Category I sites are basically the same, even if they are called by different terms, delivered by different mechanisms, or delivered with different degrees of internal coherence. The services offered generally are:

- C intake and assessment;
- C case management;
- C support for earning a high school diploma or GED certificate;
- C work readiness and soft skills training;
- C barriers-to-work removal (child care, transportation, tattoo removal);
- C substance abuse counseling and intervention;
- C subsidized work experience;
- C job search support;
- C job development;
- C job placement support; and
- C post-placement follow-up.

The delivery of work readiness services is described in Table 7. All projects have a formal intake and assessment process, and all provided intensive case management services to youth who are enrolled. All projects emphasized the need to get a high school certificate, either a diploma or a GED. If youth were able to return to school, that was their main task; if they needed to work, the preparation for the diploma or GED was organized around their work schedules.

**Table 7. Work Readiness Services and Providers in the Youth Offender Category I Sites**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Denver</b>	<b>Houston</b>	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>Richmond, CA</b>	<b>Seattle</b>
Intake and Assessment	DAYS	ETC or GCT	SDP	YSB/ YouthWorks	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates
Case Management	DAYS	ETC or GCT	Superior Court/ EDSI	YSB, NH, YouthWorks	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates
Diploma or GED Help	DAYS, CCD	ETC or GCT	TOPS and Twilight (diplomas)	YSB, LEAP, YouthBuild	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates
Soft and Life Skills Training	DW	ETC or GCT	EDSI/CIS	YSB/NH YouthWorks	Metro YMCA Pacific Associates
Barrier Removal	DAYS	ETC or GCT	Superior Court/ EDSI	YSB/NH YouthWorks	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates
Vocational Education	CCD/ OJT	HW/ CC of Houston/ OJT	OJT	YouthBuild/ OJT/ PAL	South Seattle Community College/ Op. Skyways/ OJT
Substance Abuse/ Personal Counseling	DAYS	ETC or GCT	Probation/ SDP	YouthWorks	KCSC, Safe Futures, Pacific Associates

Table 8 reports the partners responsible for the job search, placement and follow-up for Category I projects. Some projects used public works jobs for subsidized employment (Richmond); others paid part of the wage and hoped that the employer would pick up the full wage after a youth proved her/his worth (Seattle, Philadelphia). All projects provided follow-up services after placement, checking with both youth and employer.

**Table 8. Work Development and Placement Process for Youth Offender Category I Sites**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Denver</b>	<b>Houston</b>	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>Richmond, CA</b>	<b>Seattle</b>
Subsidized Work Experience	DAYS	ETC/GCT	EDSI	Year One: OW, Year Two: YouthWorks	Safe Futures, KCSC
Job Development	DAYS	ETC/GCT	EDSI	Year One: YouthWorks Chamber, Year Two: YouthWorks	Pacific Associates, KCSC
Job Search Support	DAYS	ETC/GCT	EDSI	YouthWorks	Pacific Associates, Chamber, Safe Futures, KCSC
Job Placement	DAYS	ETC/GCT	EDSI	YouthWorks	Pacific Associates, Safe Futures
Follow-up	DAYS	ETC/GCT	EDSI	YSB/ YouthWorks	Safe Futures, Pacific Associates, KCSC

A surprise to the sites has been the large proportion of their recruits who are under 18. There are probably several factors that have led to this outcome:

- C Several probation officers reported that they wanted to refer youth who “could benefit” from the opportunity that the YODP project offered them. When pressed they explained that they wanted to send youth who were not in too much trouble with the law, who were not violent, nor were seriously abusing alcohol or drugs.
- C At a Richmond Core Team meeting, where case managers review cases, all cases that surfaced during the evaluation site visit were of older youth (19 or older). When asked, one veteran team member said that older youth were harder to track down.
- C In Denver, the project manager reported that it took different strategies to work with youth within the target range; 14 to 16 year olds differed from 17 to 19 year olds or 20 to 24 year olds. DAYS' experience typically has been with youth under the age of 18.



- C Only two projects specifically planned for older youth. These were Philadelphia with its Twilite classrooms and Seattle with Pacific Associates as a partner.

With the exception of the GCT and Pacific Associates programs, the sites encouraged youth to get a high school credential before looking for work. Part of this reflects the fact that the most youth offenders recruited into the project were younger than 18, and it is difficult to find career-directed work for these younger youth. The projects, therefore, emphasized attainment of high school equivalency over finding full-time work. All projects used a graduated approach to job search and placement, but there was tension within the partnerships about the relative weight that should be given to finding full-time work versus continuing training.

Given the age range with which they must work, the projects operated within the expectations of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). WIA Title I, Core Indicators of Performance, the three indicators for youth ages 14 to 18 are:

- C Attainment of Basic Skills and, as appropriate, work readiness or occupational skills;
- C Attainment of secondary school diplomas and their recognized equivalents;
- C Placement and retention in post-secondary education or advanced training, or placement and retention in military service, employment, or qualified apprenticeships.

The projects are addressing the employability issues of target youth, but they need more time to demonstrate that the integrated services model provision pays off.

Only Seattle keeps data in a form to distinguish age and skills. Of the 38 clients enrolled with Pacific Associates, 36 were 18 or older. Twenty-eight clients were basic-skills-deficient; 24 were school dropouts; and 19 were below the education level appropriate for their age. Twenty-three of the youth were enrolled in basic skills classes and 31 in job skills classes; six had jobs. Older clients appear to have the same needs as younger ones. There is no reason to believe that they will not benefit from the YODP services.

As of fall 2000, the five Category I projects were serving over 600 youth. This number is likely to be an understatement because of problems with the accuracy and timeliness of the reporting systems. Table 9 represents the best estimate of enrollment and disposition of Category I youth.

Neither Job Corps nor military options have been chosen by Category I participants to date. Part of this outcome is the age of most youth. Job Corps often requires youth to leave home, which has been a barrier. Under current recruitment policies, staffs reported that the military is not taking youth who have criminal histories and it is difficult for youth to get into the military with a GED instead of a high school diploma.

**Section II - Category I - Model Community Projects**

Denver's DAYS has a practice of six-week work crew experiences that stems from its background as an alternative sentencing opportunity for community service. The work crew experience serves as a practical assessment tool and provides subsidized work experience for

**Table 9. Current Status of Clients, Category I Sites**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Denver (10/4/00)</b>	<b>Houston (9/27/00)</b>	<b>Richmond (10/11/00)</b>	<b>Philadelphia (10/6/00)</b>	<b>Seattle (10/18/00)</b>
Enrollment Goal	300	500	200	200	166
Total Enrollment	142	57	Est. 94	160 (Court referrals)	159
Unsubsidized Employment	19 (PT) 4 (FT)	7-9	NR	NR	7
Subsidized Employment	110	NR	33*	7*	NR
Joined the Military	0	0	0	0	0
Joined Job Corps	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
In School	25	3 (GCT only)	39	45*	100
Enrolled in GED Classes	23	20-25	14	0	30-40
Pre-employment Training	124	45	Est.80-90	40 at EDSI	139
Entered College	1	1	2	NR	7 (Voc. Ed.)
Completed Education	NR	NR	8	NR	NR
Incarcerated	7	1*	10	8*	6*
Moved	6	NR	NR	NR	NR
Dropped	26	NR	NR	NR	8
Referred for Services	15	7*	NR	NR	32
Assessed	142	57	94	160	139
Follow-up Services	144	57	NR	NR	NR

\* Denotes counts provided on the YODP Fact Sheet, September 30, 2000. Breakdown of Richmond counts date from YSB roster of May 2000.

youth to put on their resumes. Seattle's Safe Futures staff believed that they can reach the youth best by keeping them in groups and finding community projects that bind them to each other and to the community. Both projects have developed this way to give virtually all the youth in their program some subsidized work.

None of the projects worked explicitly in gang suppression. Staffs in both Denver and Houston attended meetings of anti-gang coordination groups. Youth in general revealed their gang affiliation only to those they trusted. By offering coordinated services to help youth reach legal employment, staffs believed they were providing an alternative to gang-crime as an income-generating strategy. As already mentioned, Seattle's Safe Futures targeted gangs for recruitment. Its strategy was to develop bonds between the youth and the community, and they pointed out that none of the places where youth painted murals over gang graffiti (tags, in the local language) have been marred.

Most projects have chosen locations that are sensitive to gang territories. The choice of Philadelphia schools is problematic because three of the four are in north Philadelphia where youth from other parts of the city will not go. Several target high schools are in rough parts of town as well. There had been discussion of changing the selection of high schools as the project goes forward. All of the project-based centers are clean, simply furnished, safe, and pleasant.

### **Collateral Services**

What constitutes collateral services depends on the central tasks of projects in the specific category. In Category I projects, work readiness, and life skills training are defined as collateral services.

All projects offered soft skills and life skills training, albeit in different dosages and in different ways. For Denver, DW comes to the DAYS center one week of the six weeks work crew experience. Seattle used "Teach Change," a leadership and community service method of addressing life skills. KCSC also was negotiating with Evergreen High School to offer credit for its work readiness training as part of the high school's school-to-work program. All projects offered some other support to youth, such as providing bus tokens for participating in activities, uniforms for school activities, and child care for youth with dependents.

None of the projects provided vocational education directly. Denver sent youth interested in a specific occupation to the City College of Denver; Houston used the Houston Community College or the Texas Engineering Service. Pacific Associates had a long-standing relationship with West Seattle Community College for youth interested in vocational training. Seattle also had a YouthBuild and Opportunity Skyways, an airplane maintenance training program, to which it had referred one youth each. Richmond had a contract with the local YouthBuild project for preparing five youth per year, but the director was willing to take as many project youth as were referred to him. Richmond also referred interested youth to the Contra Costa Community College.

Philadelphia emphasized a three-tiered approach to on-the-job training. Jobs in Tier One were part time at minimum wage. Youth could demonstrate that they are serious about working. Tier Two jobs were full time, had benefits, and paid up to \$6.50/ hour in wages. These last for a year and demonstrated that the youth had solved such problems as transportation and child care. Tier Three jobs were full time and paid a wage that provided independence. Often the Tier Three jobs were offered by the organization the youth was already working for.

All the projects provided support for transportation and child care as needed. Some provided funds for work boots, tool kits, school activity fees, etc. as well.

### **Staff Recruitment**

In general, the main staffs of provider agencies have been stable, but hiring for project-specific staff has proved more difficult. In Philadelphia, it took a year to hire the probation officer who is responsible for connecting adjudicated youth with the project and following them up. Evidently court hiring is always laborious because of required background checks. In Seattle, the King County Superior Court transferred other workers to the project. The director of the Community Services Program of the King County Superior Court said that it would take most of the project to hire through the Court.

Hiring front-line staff for an 18-month project led to rapid turnover. Richmond had only one front-line staff member remaining, even though all the former staff members work in agencies in town. Apparently, they began looking for stable employment almost as soon as they were hired. Denver also had lost all but one of its original front-line staff. In Seattle, the front-line staff were still in place. The KCSWDC planner believes this is because they have heard from the beginning that the county intended to maintain relationships with the youth of the area after the grant. The planner is sure that the staff, too, would start looking for permanent positions if they believed that the continuing work were not forthcoming.

Philadelphia front-line staff had also changed markedly. The changes, however, had more to do with reorganization than with hiring and retention.

The directors of youth employment programs in Denver and Houston and the supervisors of the project in the Philadelphia, Richmond and Seattle workforce development corporations are all veteran leaders in employment and training. The project manager in Denver was hired for the project and he had years of juvenile justice management experience. His counterpart in Seattle was a career case manager with King County before being promoted to a supervisor for the YODP project.

The teachers in the Philadelphia project are all experienced, certified teachers in the SDP. And, EDSI transferred an experienced case manager, job developer, and work readiness trainer to the project. Houston hired two supervisors; one was an experienced youth mental health administrator and the other was an experienced probation officer.

It was the community-based, young hires who were most likely to move to another position during the project. They were young, college graduates or had completed some college. And, they were testing

the work for its career potential. Several of those interviewed had backgrounds similar to the youth with whom they worked. They also had a vision for helping youth like their own contemporaries who did not progress out of the poverty-stricken neighborhoods, as they had done.

Denver, Houston, and Seattle had a program of staff training that had developed either out of the project needs or was an operating principle of the lead organizations. Philadelphia staff wished it could have some training for the certified teachers working with the target population, but this had been difficult to arrange with teaching schedules. In Richmond, the project staff had received formal training primarily through technical assistance consultants; the internal training time had been spent working on issues of definition (meaning of case management, work ready) and operating philosophy (get into jobs quickly vs. extending the work readiness training) among the partnering organizations.

### **Target Population Recruitment**

Table 10 shows that the sites differed in the proportions of their youth clients that were referred to the projects from courts. In both Denver and Houston, there had been a concerted effort to recruit youth from the target neighborhoods as well. Houston's ETC reported that youth walked in because they heard that the program will help them find work. And, Denver reported that youth were self-enrolling because they had heard that DAYS would help them get a job.

**Table 10. Sources of Youth Clients in the Model Communities Youth Offender Demonstration Project**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Denver (10/4/00)</b>	<b>Houston (9/27/00)</b>	<b>Philadelphia (10/11/00)</b>	<b>Richmond (10/6/00)</b>	<b>Seattle (10/18/00)</b>
Numbers	142	57	160	94	159
Referrals	60 Court; 82 recruited	3 GCT-Court 54 recruited	58 Yr. 1; 102 Yr 2 Court; no record of others	85 Court 9 recruited	80 Court 79 Recruited
Background	Diverse, Mostly Hispanic	Diverse, mostly Hispanic	Diverse, mostly African American	Diverse; mostly African American	Diverse, mostly Asian
Age	104 less than 18	No record	No record	Most under 17	122 less than 18

DAYS had developed into a One-Stop Center with enrollment, assessment, GED counseling, work crew experience—all offered from one place. Denver's staff members had prepared brochures and had visited all the high schools in the target area (both traditional and alternative). They also had spoken to counselors and administrators about the project and encouraged them to send youth to the program. Word of mouth, contacts with the Highland Weed and Seed office, and coordination with other community-based organizations all had produced referrals to the project.

Seattle and Houston have staffs who know the residents of the target neighborhoods and recruited youth directly from the street. Seattle had a community grass-roots approach, spotting youth leaders and getting them involved with the project, assuming that the other youth would join. The White Center location and the fact that the whole building was dedicated to the YODP project brought youth in to “hang out” with friends and get connected to the project staff. The project also had begun offering GED classes as well as case management, assessment, work readiness, and group projects—all in one place.

Houston's GCT must await the referral of youth from the court, but the staff had begun to contact various court officials and probation officers to describe the project and what it could do for adjudicated youth under their supervision. Probation officers in Seattle also noted that the project needed to develop a reputation with other parole officers if they were to make referrals to the program.

In Philadelphia, a court staff member also said that the failure of youth to show up in the TOPS and Twilite classrooms after referral distanced local parole officers from the project. He reported that 80 percent of referred youth were showing up, now that the project coordinator (a probation officer) had been hired to facilitate the connections for the youth with the project. Yet, he said that the coordinator needed to make face-to-face contact with other parole officers to make sure that they knew the project had changed.

School principals and the SDP Conduct Office made referrals to the YODP TOPS and Twilite classrooms. During the first year when few court-referred youth came to the classes, they were almost all internal SDP referrals. This was a cause of some tensions during year two of the project. The principals had counted on the TOPS and Twilite rooms to alleviate discipline problems in their schools, but the PWDC reported that the courts can fill the classrooms with adjudicated youth. A middle ground had developed, with the project coordinator checking the background of youth the principals want to refer to the project classrooms. As it turned out, most of the youth causing disciplinary problems had some court involvement as well. There is a worry, however, that the project classrooms will reach a point where they cannot accept more court-referred youth because of crowding.

Richmond reported that 90 percent of its youth are court-referred. Judging from the YSB roster, all of the youth had some court involvement at some point.

### **Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance support was provided to grantees at conferences, during site visits, and by electronic means. Technical assistance and training was provided to all the awardees at two conferences hosted by Research and Evaluation Associates. The first was in Washington, D.C. (September 1999) and the second was in Tampa, Florida (February 2000). Regular telephone contacts also were made to each site to arrange and assess technical assistance provided. See Table 11 for the roster of technical assistance site visits. Staff at the sites also met at professional meetings, such as the annual conference sponsored by OJJDP. Each of the sites appreciated the technical assistance offered.

**Table 11. Technical Assistance Provided to Category I Model Communities Projects**

<b>Denver</b>	<b>Houston</b>	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>Richmond</b>	<b>Seattle</b>
Needs Assessment 8/1999	Needs Assessment 8/1999	Needs Assessment 8/1999	Needs Assessment 8/1999	9 Needs Assessment 8/1999
Performance Measurement 1/2000	Recruiting, Processing and Serving Clients 4/2000	Implementation Needs Assessment 5/2000	Implementation Needs Assessment 3/2000	Bi-level Case Management 12/1999
Gang Initiatives and Aftercare 3/2000	Implementation Needs Assessment 6/2000	Programming and Program Implementation 7/2000	Substance Abuse Treatment and Resources 6/2000	Client Enrollment and Processing 3/2000
Programming for 14-15 Year Olds, Reemphasis on School Completion 8/2000 Telephone	Gang Initiatives Training with Goals and Objectives; Juvenile Justice Research Findings 9/2000	Plan to Serve Eligible Youth and Design of a Client Database 11/2000	Roles and Responsibilities Among Partners 10/2000	Developing Career Opportunities (Planned but Postponed)
Anti-gang Activity through the Metro-Gang Coalition and DAYS Programs 8/2000				

Denver requested help in measuring performance outcomes and defining project expectations early in the project. Denver also requested help in anti-gang initiatives; a consultant reported that a thorough anti-gang program appeared beyond the scope of the project. Denver was recommended to work with the Local Weed and Seed office that had an anti-gang program focus. A second gang-related technical assistance consultation developed anti-gang programming for DAYS and encouraged closer working relationships with the Metro Gang Coalition.

Houston delayed implementation of the project for reasons discussed earlier; technical assistance offered was directed to helping them move the project forward with clearer role definitions and expectations. The anti-gang aspect of the program was underdeveloped in the program plans, and technical assistance was offered in programming for anti-gang measures.

Philadelphia was assessed to need assistance with youth recruitment and referral to services, and also a need to provide for youth outside the school terms. Technical assistance was offered in role definitions and responsibilities and in developing a complete implementation plan. Plans were made

to marshal project resources to provide for summer activities for enrolled youth and to plan for providing access to services for adjudicated youth on probation.

The Richmond project requested assistance in drug abuse intervention and treatment resources. The project also was assessed to need assistance in defining roles and responsibilities. Both topics were addressed in two technical assistance events.

Seattle requested technical assistance in helping partners work effectively together, especially when programming responsibility for a youth was shared by the KCSC and Safe Futures. Bi-level case management training was provided in response to this request. During an assessment visit, the technical assistance coordinator noticed a backlog in client enrollment and processing. He recommended that the project get some technical assistance on resource and responsibility reallocation; this recommendation was accepted.

### **Sustainability**

Aspects of every project are likely to continue. Some partnerships will continue to collaborate. The court-probation and employment training agency partnerships, for example, are reported to be mutually beneficial as described earlier. Court supported services will continue and may leverage some services for court-supervised youth in employment and training programs. The following is a synopsis, community by community, of the sustainability status of Category I projects:

- C** **Denver's** partnership is expected to continue. The new executive director of MOET reported that youth programs are a model for the adult programs, and he intended to realign the rest of MOET to foster the kind of collaborations Youth Opportunities and Youth Offender Demonstrations have operated. He was committed to ensuring that youth offenders had access to all youth services. The partners reported that they have been able to leverage their funding by using each other rather than duplicating services. The new Youth Opportunities and WIA funding plus the chance of getting an extension of the current project in the Letter Competition meant that there was a special window for making youth programs deep and effective for the whole city. The one service that was not likely to continue without special funding was the intensive case management, which had proved so important with the target population. Staff did not think that the State of Colorado would pay for case management services.
- C** The City of **Houston** received a new Youth Opportunities grant, and four youth One-Stop Career Centers are envisioned as part of that grant. The youth offender staff expected to be assigned to these One-Stop Centers after the YODP grant, so that experienced staff would be available to youth offenders in each target neighborhood. Once more, the intensive case management was probably not going to be possible because case loads at centers would prevent it. As with Denver, however, the partnership is likely to survive. The partners have identified common interests and ways to leverage each other's resources. The length of the original YODP grant came in for criticism; staff of the service providers, GCT and ETC, did not think that there was enough time to show what the youth



would be able to accomplish. In general, they are young; they have not had the time to establish themselves and prove that the investment in them was worth the effort.

- C The **Philadelphia** project is in a state of flux, so it is hard to tell what the partnership will eventually look like. The school staff, however, believed that the TOPS and Twilite classes will continue when the grant is finished. EDSI is not sure that they will be able to work with the target population after the grant, but the probation officer thinks that the court might be pleased to have someone making sure that the youth attend school and graduate. It was the intensive case management that the Philadelphia aftercare program had lacked, however, so it is not clear how this officer would avoid being overwhelmed by the number of court-ordered youth being sent to the SDP. In talking with youth at three high schools during the site visit, it was clear that they were anxious for the program to help them get decent jobs. Without employment training and case management services, it may be hard to keep the youth in school.
  
- C The City of **Richmond** was sure that all of its youth will be able to go to One-Stop Centers being designed around the community for employment and training assistance. RichmondWorks staff believed that it had all the skills necessary to serve this population as it is; they worked with their families, and they can work with their youth. The CBOs think that the target population needed special care and support; they will continue to provide such care and support using whatever funds they can find. Currently, the only One-Stop Center operating is the main office of Richmond Works. It provided job information, some work readiness training opportunities, job development, job placement, and some follow-up. The intensive case management that youth have received through the YODP grant is not likely to continue.
  
- C The City of **Seattle** was interested in continuing services to the White Center community, and members of the partnership have enjoyed working with and learning from each other. The planner with KCSWDC and the administrator of the King County Work Training Program reported that the coming year would be an especially difficult financial year for the county. State voters had repealed the registration fee for automobiles in the previous year, a major revenue source for county programs; they were hoping that the Letter Competition would give them an additional year of outside support before they would pick up the cost of the programs. During the year, the county will work out alternative revenue sources to support county services, and they were confident that youth programs in White Center will continue.

## **Lessons Learned From Category I Sites**

Even before the end of the Model Communities Youth Offender Demonstration Projects, it is possible to make some observations about Category I sites. These involve:

- C choice of sites;

- C organization of the demonstration; and
- C delivery of services.

The following section briefly discusses these three dimensions.

## **Choice of Sites**

The goal of the Youth Offender Demonstration Projects is to get youth offenders and gang members between the ages of 14 and 24 into long-term employment at wage levels that will prevent future dependency. It also seeks to break the cycle of crime and juvenile delinquency that contributes to recidivism and non-productive activities. Category I sites, large cities with significant problems of youth crime, were aptly chosen as pilot sites. It is youth crime that drew attention to the target neighborhoods. The issues, however, are deeper.

Youth from these neighborhoods were leaving school before high school graduation and before achieving the minimum skills for obtaining career-oriented work at livable wages. An on-going tension within the projects had been the need and desire of both partners and clients to move the youth into the kind of work positions envisioned by the demonstration and the inadequacy of academic preparation for such work.

The youth also brought to the project myriad life and work readiness skill needs. Staff of all projects described or alluded to the difficulty in getting the youth to connect with the services, especially getting them to show up for them. The lack of trusting relationships is countered at each site by matching a case manager with every youth, but trust relationships take time to develop.

The time required to build solid relationships added to the tension between supporting youth and moving them toward work. Several sites, however, found that when they sent youth out to work places quickly, they soon lost their jobs. One partner reported that both the employer and the employee have to win if employers are to continue taking youth recommended by the project. There was dismay in several of the partnerships about how long it was taking to move the youth to work. Budgets and plans had not accounted for keeping the youth on the project rolls for years instead of months or weeks.

Communities that received Category I funding already demonstrated a commitment to youth through other grant activities, yet the connection between youth offender agencies and youth employment agencies was new. Partners reported how important these connections have been for both their agencies' missions. The partnerships are likely to continue, and the demonstration was the instrument for this breakthrough.

Because the cities had other youth employment programs, many partners knew each other and had worked with each other; this was an important building block for the Youth Offender Demonstration Projects. Youth Opportunities grants in Denver and Houston had established youth employment programs and service provider networks that the YODP grant built on. Similarly, Safe Futures grants

had built part of the network for Richmond and Seattle. The School District of Philadelphia, in contrast, was not well connected to agencies operating beyond its own system, and had not been able to make the whole system of services operational.

Although these grants already had established youth employment as an important issue for the cities, project officials did not fully understand how intractable the youth employment problem was. A member of Denver's staff, for example, said she was shocked by reports of youth struggles in target neighborhoods. A staff member at the Philadelphia Family Court mentioned that thousands of youth left incarceration each year, failed to show up at the assigned school, failed to graduate, and failed to get decent occupations, in a word, failed. White Center youth drew attention when reports of highest youth crime and the lowest school achievement in the county were matched to the realization that there were no youth services there. Youth employment is becoming established as having special needs (life and work maturity skills) and special considerations (union restrictions, youths' need for specific occupational preparation). But these communities are developing experience with youth employment and Denver and Houston are both realigning the employment and training agencies to provide an on-going youth focus.

The timing of the demonstration, nonetheless, took advantage of the nation's long period of economic growth. In general, periods of economic expansion draw into the labor market those who are often harder to employ (mothers of young children, youth, retired, disabled workers) and periods of economic decline push many of these workers out again. The strong economy, therefore, has provided a window of opportunity for workers with criminal histories to find jobs. Should they develop a reliable and solid work record, they have a good chance of making a living their whole work life.

### **The Organization of the Youth Offender Demonstration Project**

There were times during the evaluation visits when partners inquired how much they should emphasize the demonstration aspect and how they were expected to deliver a specific set of services in a standardized way? "How threatening was a 'mess-up' along the way?" some asked. All projects were learning as they operated, and the two partnerships that were realigned in significant ways taught something about how to make the integrated-services model work.

Seattle did not initially plan to have all service providers in a single building in the target neighborhood. The project manager reported that he was driving in the neighborhood and saw the "for rent" sign just at the time they had been looking for space. The King County Superior Court (KCSC) decided to put its case managers there and offered to pay part of the rent, so the project acquired the whole second-floor serendipitously. The shared space has provided a single place for all the youth to come. It also has allowed cross-learning among the partners.

Denver's DAYS did not know very much about youth employment and it has traversed a major learning curve in adopting employment and training strategies. DAYS knew how to work with court-supervised youth, and the typical alternative sentence was for six weeks. They developed the six-week work-crew model. They have found that the model remains an important part of the work-readiness assessment and training for all enrolled clients. With YODP, however, they had to develop employer

networks, case management strategies, other work readiness and work placement services. They also learned how important the high school diploma or its equivalent was and began to offer GED tutoring. The project center now may become an alternative school. The achievement of one set of strategies seemed to open the way for the next.

Despite the messiness of the implementation process, the projects were meeting a unique need and partners were learning to work together to realize YODP goals. The demonstration project taught more than just the immediate partners how to make an integrated-services model work. The executive director of the Denver Mayor's Office of Employment and Training (MOET), for example, wanted to use the demonstration as a model of how WIA services could be delivered for all MOET clients.

At one point in the evaluation visits, the visitor wondered whether it made any difference which kind of agency was lead partner. There was one school leader (Philadelphia's SDP); one youth offender leader (Denver's DAYS), two youth development leaders (Richmond's YSB and Seattle's Safe Futures), and one employment and training leader (Houston's HW). At this point in the demonstration, it is hard to distinguish among the projects on this basis, but it remains a point of interest whether the relative strengths of the lead partner will affect its final achievements.

One surprise in the demonstration so far has been the large number of younger youth recruited to the program. Several partners reported that the needs and strategies for working with the youth offender population differed by their ages: 14 to 16 year olds were different from 17 to 18 year olds and those over 18. Seattle and Philadelphia had designed their projects to accommodate the age difference, but other sites seemed to have drifted into serving predominately youth under 18. Referrals may have been the main reason for the lower ages. Several probation officers reported that they were selective about who they referred to the project--none who were violent, none who have unusually great needs. Recruiters on the streets also seemed to have referred or encouraged younger clients to enroll. The importance of recommending youth to employers who had completed high school or GED training also focused attention of the projects on the need to keep youth in school. Doing this, they believed, was easier than trying to make up course work later.

One theme of concern on the part of partners was the shortness of the demonstration, especially after the clients proved to be predominantly younger youth. Staffs did not believe that they could demonstrate the effectiveness of the youth offender employment intervention when the enrolled youth were several years from being expected to assume full-time employment.

The age of the enrolled youth brought different tensions. In Seattle, Safe Futures reported that building relationships and exploiting the peer pressure of the age group for the good, both required that the youth work together in groups. The staff have managed to find multiple projects for the community and have developed art as a particular strength. Case managers appeared hesitant to place these youth by themselves in the drudgery kinds of work for which their age and skills would recommend them. By keeping them in school and developing different marketable skills, they hoped that youth would not have a first work experience that would discourage them from trying to do better.

All projects included partners or collaborators who represented major actors in the Youth Offender Demonstration model: employment and training, alternative sentencing, aftercare for youth returning from incarceration, and gang prevention initiatives. The emphasis in the projects had been on employment training with community service activities seen as a component. Aftercare was provided through employment training, case management, and support services. Anti-gang measures were indirect, that is, the activity structure and preparation for a job with good wages were seen as deterrents to gang membership.

The schools have proved difficult to bring into the partnerships, although their importance has emerged more strongly. They are beleaguered by criticism, and it does not help their standing to be faced with the size of their dropout problems or their difficulties in educating returning offenders in their classrooms. Despite the “tough sell,” it would have helped all projects to be alerted from the start about the need for developing a good working relationship between the projects and the school staff.

A factor that emerged for Denver and Houston projects was the need to demonstrate citizenship. Both sites had large numbers of immigrants who needed to present a birth certificate or Social Security Card to prove citizenship before enrolling. As a result, otherwise eligible youth were unable to be served because they were not U.S. citizens. Schools generally did not require proof of citizenship, and the need for it with the YODP grant was another source of tension with the school programs.

None of the projects involved the youth and their parents/care givers in the design of the project. Focus groups at the end of the Kulick grant in Houston were cited as youth involvement, and focus groups in the Philadelphia schools were cited as reasons for keeping the programs there rather than in community agencies. Denver and Seattle have some involvement with parents through the project. Knowing that stable parental relationships are one of the “protective” factors from youth crime, involving families would strengthen the projects.

### **Delivery of Services**

The planning period for the YODP operation did not seem long enough for most sites. The first evaluation site visits during the winter of 2000 found few services actually being delivered. The post-award conference was appreciated, but local issues and factors slowed the movement from plan to operation. The sites appeared to have needed greater clarification of expectations and fairly intensive technical assistance early in the project to develop a practical and strategic implementation plan that addressed each site's local barriers, including political ones.

The sites reported that they were pleased with the opportunities that the post-award conferences and the technical assistance offered them. Recognizing how many projects struggled with clarifying partners' roles, it seems as well that the sites needed technical assistance with internal project functioning early in the demonstration.

The Category I projects are led by staffs with both interest and experience in youth employment, youth development, and/or juvenile justice. While front-line workers typically were close to the ages of the clients, project leaders were veteran employment and training professionals who were well-prepared

for the work of the projects. Front-line workers seemed hard to keep on the project in several sites. Denver and Richmond lost many of their case workers to longer term employment; the realignment in Philadelphia transferred the CIS and EDSI case managers and job developers. If relationship-building is as important as most would agree, this aspect of the project has been fragile.

Most projects planned for services to be delivered serially. Work readiness and life skills are offered after school and at a different facility from the educational component, whether that is high school or GED. The model of integrating work-based learning and school-based learning is virtually absent with the exception of the Gulf Coast Trades. Work experience is often at fast-food or other low-skill jobs, and there is not much access to vocational training, except what is taught on a work-experience assignment. Some work-experience assignments are appropriate to the age of the project clients, but opportunities for developing a broader career awareness through job shadowing and internships seemed rare in many of the projects. Such opportunities were related to the youth having a strong sense of direction and their willingness to ask for help to attain their goals. Having a strong sense of direction is a life dimension missing among many teenagers, not just those in the projects.

Providing a more enriched form of preparation for long-term careers is difficult. A thorough STW program requires the stability and resources that a residential facility or a full-time day school can provide. Some school districts, such as Seattle's, have strong STW programs, but many of those in the study communities do not. Seattle is beginning to work with one school in its target area.

Once youth were assigned to work experience or educational programs, even part time, it was hard to “wrap other services around” these other commitments. Seattle provided many services between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., after the youths' other activities of the day were over. Staff there and in Denver were available through the day as well. This was because some youth are free early in the day and both centers offer GED classes. Staff back each other up across the extended work day, so youth are served by whomever is present when they come by. ETC in Houston had cross-trained its staff to provide for an extended day as well. Philadelphia gets around the scheduling problems by offering work readiness on Fridays, during regular class hours for TOPS or Twilite youth. Richmond hoped to offer most services during regular work hours, but the work readiness training for project youth is offered on Friday afternoons from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The staff also had taken groups of youth on overnight retreats and cultural trips as a connecting time and as a reward for showing increasing dependability.

Projects struggled with demonstrating success, especially when clients were not ready or able to enter the workforce. Part of this concern reflects the earlier discussion of demonstrating the projects' effectiveness in a short period. Part of the concern was that teenagers often lack direction and follow-through. It is hard to hurry the maturation process that underlies some of the problems youth face. Case managers are pleased when the youth begin to show-up for events more regularly, when they return greetings, and start taking an interest in something. Some changes are more noticeable. A KCSC judge attended the open house at the White Center and remarked that she had not been seeing some of the youth in attendance at the court.

The projects wish that there were other measurable and acceptable benchmarks that would demonstrate progress before the youth are employed full time. Such benchmarks could be increasing dependability in participating in project activities, remaining free of further convictions, passing part or all of the GED examinations, being able to keep a part-time job, or making acceptable progress (credits earned) toward a diploma.

Talking to some youth in most of the projects, the evaluator was impressed by how important it was to these youth to get jobs. There was an earnestness about their desire for decent jobs and it was heartening to realize how much the demonstration's goals were shared by the youth.

## **Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations for Model Communities Projects**

### **Choice of Sites**

The choice of sites was apt for the Youth Offender Demonstration. Several features seem important to recognize that:

- C It was beneficial to be doing the project when the economy was strong and communities had strong demands for new sources of workers.
- C The connection between the courts and probation department and the employment and training agencies was paramount to ensure that the clients connected to and remain engaged with the project.
- C The cities benefitted from their early recognition of the problems of youth employment and their experience with addressing the issue before tackling the youth offender population.
- C Projects needed to be aware of and plan for youth with multiple life and educational achievement concerns.
- C Projects would be strengthened by a mutually beneficial operating relationship with local schools to encourage drop out and crime prevention before the youth have left school permanently.
- C Projects would benefit from involving families in the programming and planning of the intervention efforts.

### **The Organization of the Youth Offender Demonstration Project**

The Category I sites differed in their approach to the demonstration project. The variation has proved useful in learning what works and what doesn't work. At this point in the projects' history, what seems to work are projects that have:

- C a clear lead agency and a clearly identified operational leader;
- C developed shared leadership among the partner agencies so that each is proactive in realizing the YODP goals;
- C recognized and planned for different programming interventions with different segments of the youth (14 to 24) age group or had a clear focus on one segment of that age group;
- C a willingness to include all aspects of the integrated services model: gang prevention, aftercare for youth on probation, alternative sentencing and community service, and employment and training;
- C the ability to learn as they operate and realign the project when aspects are not working; and
- C the ability to clarify and reduce tensions among partners concerning role and agency responsibilities and differences of operating style.

### **Delivery of Services**

It appears that the Youth Offender Demonstration Projects have learned the importance of:

- C developing a complete and workable implementation plan early in the project;
- C ensuring an effective planning period;
- C providing youth with a high school diploma or GED certificate;
- C providing other services around a flexible time schedule;
- C using a graduated approach to job placement and advancement;
- C providing a place for the youth to gather or come by on their schedule rather than at set times; and
- C offering activities and relationships that bond youth to caring adults and to the community in which they live.

The projects have not yet demonstrated that the interventions, as planned and implemented, lead to career-oriented entry level jobs. Nor have they yet demonstrated that the intervention with younger



youth will lead to the transition to career-oriented jobs and result in reduced criminal and gang involvement. The current cadre of projects has not included a strong family involvement in their planning and operations.

## **Recommendations**

1. Projects need to have working relationships with key leaders in courts and schools who will become engaged in the employment and training, aftercare, community service, and gang prevention strategies of the project.
2. Projects need to include youth and families in project planning and activities.
3. Projects need to demonstrate a clear lead agency and provide in their budget for that agency to remain involved with the project partners and their activities.
4. Project agencies need to have some experience with demonstrations or demonstrate an understanding of the particular requirements of a demonstration grant.
5. Projects need to have a practical understanding of the population they are working with and demonstrate in planning and budgeting what it takes to transition these youth into full time employment.
6. Projects need to work with technical assistance specialists early in their planning to clarify roles and cross-agency responsibilities and to develop an effective implementation plan.
7. Projects need to experiment with alternative ways to enrich the career development aspects of the youth employment and training.

## **Summary**

Over and over again, youth interviewed during the evaluation site visits mentioned that the promise of jobs at a decent wage was what drew them to the project and keeps them engaged with it. The model of crime prevention being tied to employment training and placement seems critical for these youth. Probation officers concurred that assistance with the transition to employment was an important feature that led them to refer youth to the YODP project. At this juncture in the projects' history, the limiting factor is the time it might take to demonstrate that the investment in education and training will result in more youth offenders or youth at risk of criminal involvement transitioning to full-time employment successfully.

## **Section III**

### **CATEGORY II - EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH OFFENDERS INITIATIVE**

#### **Introduction**

Category II Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiative projects were designed to provide comprehensive school-to-work (STW) education and training within the juvenile correctional facilities. They also were to provide follow-up services and job placements as youth leave these facilities and returned to the community. Comprehensive services developed under this project were to serve as a model for other juvenile correctional facilities across the country.

Category II is represented in the Research and Evaluation Associates' evaluation project only by the Ohio site. The Ohio project, however, is comprised of two juvenile correctional facilities that differ significantly. This section of the Interim Report treats as one account the sections where that is possible and divides into two where that is necessary.

The Ohio Department of Youth Services proposed to develop strong STW programs in two correctional facilities and to support the youths' transition back to their communities with model aftercare service programs. The project's ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism.

The proposal was written after an internal review of the youths' transition from the correctional facilities to community demonstrated there was a disconnection between institutional training and their employability. According to the proposal, inadequate links existed between institutional curriculum and the curriculum in community schools. More specifically, few students were prepared to find employment in emerging technologies and occupations; there was little access to work-based learning; and these students did not typically participate in remedial services or pursue a coherent pathway. Many did not stay in school and, if they did, they were behind in skills, grade-level placement and credits. If employment was pursued when they returned to the community, youth typically lacked core abilities to succeed in any but minimum-wage positions with little in the way of career prospects. In essence, the youth did not have much hope or vision for the future.

The project targets youth from Cuyahoga County, primarily from its two main cities, Cleveland and East Cleveland where the school dropout rate is 58 percent and 50 percent respectively. Youth offenders from the county are typically from poor, single-headed households without a member gainfully employed, have substance abuse problems and have failing records at school. The youth generally are not involved in sports, church, or other constructive outlets.

Between the proposal preparation and the onset of the project, control of Cleveland Schools was moved from the School Board to the Mayor's Office and the entire STW apparatus was disbanded.

The single school district was divided into six districts with the sixth consisting of alternative schools. In East Cleveland, Shaw Alternative School's Information Technology STW program remained intact.

The remainder of this section is divided into the following sections:

- C Findings;
- C Lessons Learned;
- C Conclusions; and
- C Recommendations.

## **Findings**

### **Planning for the Project**

Community planning was primarily inter-institutional and involved the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS), the Juvenile Court, public schools, technical centers, faith-based service providers, and the Greater Cleveland Growth Association (the equivalent of the Chamber of Commerce). An advisory board was constituted of representatives of each of these groups, with the director of DHS as one co-chair and a representative from the Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs as the other. The state set a goal for the project of reducing youth offender recidivism by 40 percent.

The project's advisory committee consists of : the co-chair of DHS, co-chair of the Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs, superintendent of Mohican Youth Center, the superintendent of the Cuyahoga County Youth Development Center, the administrator of the Department of Youth Services Grants, and the regional administrator of the Department of Youth Services. In addition, other board members included representatives from: the Cleveland Municipal School District, Greater Cleveland Growth Association (Chamber of Commerce) the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs, Turner Construction Co., Urban League, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs, Federation of Community Planning, and the East Cleveland City Schools. It should be noted that no youth, family, or neighborhood representatives served on this committee.

The initial plan was to work with the Indian River School and the Cuyahoga County Youth Development Center (YDC). After grant funding was received, the Indian River School was dropped in favor of the Mohican Youth Center (MYC).

**Mohican Youth Center Facilities.** MYC is a state-run maximum security residential incarceration site for young adults who have substance abuse problems and have committed a serious crime or a series of lesser offenses repeatedly. The institution lies three hours driving time from Cleveland in the town of Masillion, Ohio. The youth are all male and 80 percent are of ethnic minority backgrounds.

Ninety-one percent have substance abuse problems and 90 percent have been suspended from school at least once.

There are four living units, each with about 40 beds in a dormitory and two isolation units. There is a gym and a recreation room. Most of the corridors are dimly lit and unattractive, but the classrooms are brightly lit and full of resource materials.

The school at MYC is a registered charter school under the auspices of DYS. The IT Program at Mohican Youth Center is designed to operate three classes a day, each one and one-half hours long. Courses are arranged to coordinate with substance abuse treatment sessions, GED preparation, and the cognitive restructuring intervention aimed to reorient these youth to their lives after release.

The institution has a strong management information system.

**YDC Facilities.** The Youth Development Center is a county-run co-educational, working farm for youthful offenders who are 14 to 15 years old. It is located one hour's driving time north of Cleveland in the town of Hudson in Summit County. It operates under the auspices of the Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners through the Department of Justice Affairs. The youth are all referred by the Cuyahoga Juvenile Court. Sentences are open-ended, with discretion left to the Department of Justice; but the usual sentence is for six months.

YDC youth are mostly convicted of status offenses; they are mostly male, ethnic minority group members, and come from single-parent households. One staff member refers to YDC youth as “just not following the rules.”

YDC was established in 1903 as a boys' farm and became coeducational in 1974. The school at YDC, the Harry Eastman School, operates under the Cleveland Public Schools, using its curriculum and standards. It has a full complement of teachers: classroom teachers, special education classes, vocational education programs, etc. The computer lab has 22 computers, and the room is bright and full of resources. The Youth Offender Demonstration Projects funds Eastman's STW Information Technology (IT) program. So far, the relationship between the Board of Education and the Eastman School has been constructive, according to its principal. Under the grant, the school was to receive additional computers as part of the thrust to prepare youth in information technologies. The Board of Education had agreed to provide the wiring.

There is not a management information system in place for tracking the youth from YDC.

### **Establishing Effective Linkages and Partnerships**

The plan was for DYS to develop partnerships with two institutions, the Ohio STW program and Region 8 STW, Youth Visions, Inc., and the Education Development Center from Boston, MA (EDC). By the time the proposal was funded, the Region 8 STW office was disbanding and its representative on the proposed advisory committee withdrew from the project.

When the proposal was funded, therefore, DYS prepared memoranda of understanding with the Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs (CCDJA), which manages YDC, and the Cuyahoga County Department of Treatment Services (DTS), which provides aftercare and follow-up services to youth returning to the county after incarceration from either institution.

DYS prepared memoranda of agreement also with:

- C Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry Association (LMM) for work readiness, life skills training, pre-employment, job development, and case management services at various venues in Cleveland; and
- C Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) for work readiness, life skills training, information technology training and case management at the East Cleveland Community Center and at its west county site.

Both LMM and YOU were mandated to coordinate their services with the probation officers and other staff at CCDJA and DTS for case management, education, and substance abuse treatment.

These arrangements took several months, however, and the STW program at the two centers began in February 2000 at the Mohican Youth Center and in mid-April at the Youth Development Center. The first youth released to the community for aftercare services occurred for both institutions in June 2000.

The relationship between the project and the Cleveland Schools for youth returning to Cleveland is not strong. The original plan was for each high school to have a STW coordinator with whom the youth could connect after release. With the reorganization of the school district, there is now a STW coordinator for each sub-district, each with six schools. The youth are rarely returning to the traditional school setting upon release. In East Cleveland, one alternative school, Shaw High School, has maintained its STW IT program to which returning youth are being assigned.

EDC received a contract to prepare STW curriculum materials for the project and to orient stakeholders to the IT program. This activity had occurred by the time of the second site visit.

The partnership between Cuyahoga County and the state Division of Youth Services has led to sharing resources in substance abuse, agreement to use a common risk-management instrument: Youth Offender-Level of Service Inventory (YO-LSI), and to a common aftercare relapse prevention support group for youth from both Mohican and YDC.

### **Organizational Issues**

The partnership has increased communication among agencies offering services to the same target population. Communication issues, nonetheless, still need to be addressed. There are, for example, communication loops that leave one or another party out, depending on the subject of the communique and the staff members' place in the network.

Category II projects require development of operating partnerships, especially when youth are released back to their communities. Projects thus are experiencing all the relationship-building issues during the second year of the grant that projects in other categories were able to address months earlier. Category II projects require technical assistance to help them improve communications, define roles, and establish operating procedures.

Most youth in the Ohio project are younger than most workforce participants. It will be several years before project designers can judge the impact of the intervention on the kind of jobs the youth will be able to obtain once they become age-eligible.

At the time of the second evaluation site visit, the community aftercare and follow-up phase of the project had been operational only a few months. Some relationships seem to be developing between the youth, the probation officer assigned to the returning MYC youth and with the case manager at LMM. Yet youth interviewed by the evaluator voiced unhappiness with the program designed for them, its structure, and its emphasis on information technology.

### **Training and Employment Activities**

**Mohican Youth Center.** Half of the youth at Mohican Youth Center attended remedial classes; 25 percent were in GED preparation classes, and the remaining 25 percent were working at grade level. Typically, fewer than half of these youth return to education in any form after release from the center.

IT classes began at MYC in April 2000. Forty-one students were enrolled; 27 were from Cuyahoga County. Youth were divided among three classes being offered. The MYC IT classes focus on IT careers, career pathways, Windows 98 set up, and introduction to Microsoft (Word, PowerPoint, Access, Excel, and Paint). Students also learned keyboarding and software installation. Part of the course was an introduction to IT careers and a guest speaker from a community college came to MYC to describe career options in IT. The drawback of the current system is that youth arrive at MYC throughout the academic term. They leave classes upon release throughout the academic term, so it is not possible to ensure that youth have experienced the designed curriculum.

CCDJA assigned a veteran substance abuse specialist to serve as the aftercare specialist for youth returning to Cuyahoga County from MYC. Prior to release, the aftercare specialist assigned to a project youth met with him and set up a three-month plan. This way, each youth knew the person he would be meeting at the CCDJA building before he was released. The intensity of services planned for a youth depended on his risk assessment based on the Youth Offender-Level of Service Inventory (YO-LSI.)

**After Release: MYC.** Youth released from MYC were provided services through CCDJA, DTS, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries (LMM), and YOU.

Besides case management, the CCDJA aftercare specialist coordinated substance abuse services for the youth with the County Department of Treatment Services and had organized a Relapse Prevention

effort that included both MYC and YDC youth (the only treatment that has the older and younger youth served together). The aftercare specialist coordinated treatment services with the LMM case manager.

At LMM, youth received one month of intensive services, including employability training, which was held twice a week for one and one-half hours. Youth were assisted with interpersonal relationships, pre-employment skills, job development skills, and job placements. They also received follow-up after job placement and case management after probation ended from LMM. YOU provided youth with an IT course one day a week. Youth were paid \$5.50 an hour for attending the IT class. They received \$100, if they stayed for 60 days.

Both LMM and YOU provided monthly reports on services delivered, attendance, and reasons for terminations. Both organizations reported having five or six youth receiving services in any given month since June 2000 when they received their first clients.

Nine youth have been released back into the community after IT training at MYC; all are 17 to 19 years old. Of these nine, one was in sheltered care for on-going treatment and one was re-incarcerated. Of the remaining seven, four have found jobs through LMM at:

- C Clark Electric (32 hours/week, \$8.00/hour);
- C Kickers Pizza (40 hours/week, \$7 to \$10.00/hour);
- C Turner Construction ( hours/week not determined yet, \$10.00/hour); and
- C Giant Eagle (24 hours/week, \$5.50/hour).

All the youth either have completed high school or are trying to finish it. So far:

- C one has a diploma;
- C four have a GED; and
- C four are working on their GED.

The youth reported they were not interested in IT careers, and none of the jobs used the skills they learned at MYC. The staff, nonetheless, encouraged them to continue with the IT classes so that they would not lose the skills they acquired. Those without jobs were in IT classes with YOU and employability training with LMM. They received \$5.50 per hour for the time they were in training.

The youth reported that the class went over the same material they received at MYC; the teacher said that there was no way to know which students have covered what material. The staff are currently working on ways to let the YOU instructor know what the youth were taught at MYC.

There also have been communication problems between DTS aftercare specialists and the LMM program staff. The aftercare specialist may excuse youth from class and not tell LMM staff about it. All those serving youth maintained reporting systems, but they were not integrated to give a single picture of the program nor of the services a youth receives. These communication problems are on an on-going basis and are documented in LMM monthly reports. (See the recommendations at the end of this section of the Interim Report.)

Arrangements with IT employers seemed to have come to nothing. This is partly because of the youths' age and partly because of their lack of skills. LMM staff reported that even after six weeks of training (six hours per week) it is still difficult to place youth in jobs. And, none of the youth had connected to Job Corps, which was a recommendation in the original SGA. The staff would like to have more time with the youth.

All youth have four contacts from the aftercare specialists each month, including two face-to-face meetings and two sessions with a parent or teacher for up to six or seven months. The case manager at LMM tracks the youth as well. The case manager and aftercare specialist communicate with each other regularly. If the youth's employer knows he is on probation, visits can occur at work; otherwise, they meet elsewhere. This arrangement provides more intensive aftercare than youth typically received before the grant. They will have follow-up for 180 days after probation by the case manager at LMM because of the grant funds. Yet, the youth can get lost to the project after probation just by changing apartments and leaving no forwarding information; there is no legal recourse for tracking them down once probation is over. (See Table 12 for the disposition of clients from both MYC and YDC facilities.)

**Youth Development Center.** All the youth at YDC were enrolled in the Eastman School, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade school operated by the Cleveland City Schools. At the time of the first site visit in May 2000, the computer laboratory had not been completely set up, nor had any youth been released to the project in Cuyahoga County. By the second visit:

- C An IT class was being taught at Eastman School five days a week;
- C There were 139 youth being taught IT at the School;
- C 31 youth had been released from YDC, of whom 28 were African-American and 23 male;
- C the average YO-LSI index was 14, indicating that most of these youth were high risk;
- C the CCDJA case managers had met with youth the day of their release and had oriented them to the probation period and the programs assigned for them in their release plan;
- C the YOU classes in Eastside and Westside were delivering IT training and work readiness;
- C LMM was offering IT training, work readiness and case management;



- o The Relapse Prevention Group had met weekly from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and
- o those needing substance abuse intervention were receiving services.

YDC attempts to provide more connections between the youth and their parents and between the youth and their aftercare specialists. YDC provides parents with transportation funds to visit the (see Table 12, p. 86)



youth while they are incarcerated and the Cuyahoga County Office of Childrens' Comprehensive Services also offers Cuyahoga Family Workshops at YDC for the youth and their families on visiting days.

DTS has located an assessment specialist at the Harry Eastman School at YDC to serve as a bridge between the youth at YDC and the aftercare and follow-up specialists in Cleveland. He identifies the needs of the youth, their risk profile, and goals. These findings are shared with the DTS social workers before the youth are released.

Social workers are encouraged to meet the youth before release, but few of these meetings actually occur. The social workers reported that it has been difficult for them to frequently make the trip to YDC, which is an hour's drive north of Cleveland. With their existing caseload, moreover, it is difficult to establish relationships with those not assigned already to them. Nonetheless, the YDC superintendent reported that the presence of the aftercare specialist on campus creates better communication about aftercare on campus and better understanding of the transition the youth must make.

At one time, YDC developed an aftercare plan for each youth before release but then discontinued the practice. With the aftercare specialist on campus, the practice of developing a plan for each youth is being resumed. Toward this end, the aftercare specialist has developed a three-month planning template to be used with each youth. Before release, all the segments of the program will be represented: education, cottage counselor, and mental health. They will meet together to design each youth's release plan, noting unfinished business and special needs. The hope is that the release plan will lead to inter-agency treatment cooperation upon release.

**After Release: YDC.** After release most YDC youth are assigned to LMM, YOU, DTS and the CCDJA for services. The youth visit the CCDJA aftercare specialist in the downtown Cleveland Department of Justice Affairs building.

YOU Eastside provides an IT training course once a week; YOU Westside provides job training to youth 16 and older. CCDJA hired two assessment specialists who offer employability training, IT classes, and community service opportunities to 14 to 15 year olds. The employability training for these younger youth also is offered in the CCDJA building downtown. Employability training lasts one month, with classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays (8 sessions). In these sessions, youth are taught how to complete applications and prepare resumes. Bus passes are given to the youth to come to the CCDJA office and also to older youth to get to the YOU service sites.

The assessment specialists locate community service placements for the youth in Habitat for Humanity, child care centers, and other nonprofit and community agencies. Once placed, the youth receive the minimum wage for 15 hours per week. If youth work full time, they are excused from the IT class; if they work part time, they must continue to attend the IT class.

Of the 31 youth released:

- C five are at LMM;
- C 11 are at YOU Eastside (4-6 attend regularly);
- C 14 are in work readiness training at DTS;
- C one is taking an IT class, but excused from work readiness because of a work conflict;
- C three have been re-incarcerated.

LMM and YOU have five or six clients in a given month. In all, 13 youth have been served by YOU cumulatively. Ten of the 31 have found jobs ( two from LMM, two from YOU, six from DTS); one has successfully completed probation. Ten of the youth have been charged with probation violations, however, drawing some complaint from case managers who think that violations are being registered too easily. They fear that youth will be returned to incarceration for minor infractions of the probation rules.

### **Collateral Services**

Youth receive work clothing as needed and bus tokens for trips to program events. There does not seem to be any funding for transportation costs associated with work. Youth receive substance abuse interventions, but there do not seem to be relationships with providers of other services, such as mental health, glasses, etc, which the youth might need. There seems to be a lack of clarity, even among project staff as to what services could be provided to these youth.

### **Staff Recruitment**

The project is administered by the CCDJA. Each youth facility has a superintendent and a school principal. And, each school hired an IT teacher for the project. The position was filled at MYC by a teacher already on staff who applied for the opening. A person from outside the organization was hired by YDC and she came aboard just before the IT program began in April 2000.

The EDC firm provided training for the IT STW program. The training, however, occurred before the IT teacher at YDC was hired. She has proceeded generally from what she has read. The two IT teachers were to have collaborated in the development of the project, but they have met only once because of the long distance between the two sites.

Teachers also reported that their situations are markedly different and the ages of youth being served are different. The teachers at YDC's Harry Eastman School were not computer literate nor did they know how to incorporate technology into their instruction. The new teacher stayed after school every night for a week to give interested teachers an orientation to computers and their use in the classroom. She also has struggled with a lack of information about the financial resources she could draw on for materials and equipment.

The teacher at MYC is a veteran member of the staff, who has had the opportunity to visit several youth facilities with IT training programs. She has established a program for youth to have experience with computers, software and some Internet applications (but without a connection to the Internet).

The aftercare specialist who is assigned to serve the youth returning from MYC is a 10-year CCDJA veteran. For the younger youth, those 14 to 15, the Department of Treatment Services has six aftercare workers, two assessment specialists, and a drug counselor who also handles anger management interventions. Each aftercare specialist is responsible for youth in six schools, and they have a typical case load of 18 youth. At LMM, there is one case manager and one class instructor; at YOU, there is an intake specialist, the IT instructor, and employability instructors.

### **Target Population Recruitment**

Youth are recruited into the program by virtue of their assignment to correctional facilities. Evidently, the original youth in the aftercare program did not know that they were to be part of a highly structured training experience. Motivating them to participate has proved to be an on-going issue in after-release service delivery.

There are concerns about the pattern of service delivery occasioned by the incarceration and release practices. Youth arrive on a rolling basis at both facilities, and they are released on a rolling basis to the community, depending on their behavior and other factors. Teachers never know for how long they will have a youth in class. The aftercare classes and services receive released youth on a rolling basis and do not know for how long they will have them in their care. The effect, despite efforts to design a curriculum either at the residential facility or in the community, is that there is no provision for youth to complete training designed for them.

IT training seems to be a mismatch for many youth. Their academic skills are gauged by one teacher as averaging about the fourth grade level, so IT training seems irrelevant. Even those with the aptitude are reported to be uninterested in the training. The youth apparently see the IT class requirement after release as punishment and complain that they did not know ahead of time that they would have to enter a structured program. The staff at YOU depend on the aftercare workers to get youth to attend programs designed for them. They dislike the trips to downtown Cleveland as well as continual drug testing and monitoring. They were told that their training would make them eligible for jobs paying \$8.55 an hour, but they find that they do not qualify for them.

Meanwhile, trainers are impatient because there are other youth in the community who would like to take the IT training. But aftercare workers want to keep the slots open for YODP youth as they are trying to get them back into training. Staff report that many parents show little or no interest in helping keep the youth engaged with the program.

What youth generally want is a job and a GED. They tend to find a job on their own. Once they are off probation or complete their GED, they no longer return to the training program. Some are concerned, however, that the subsidized jobs the program helped them get will be cut off after

probation. There does not seem to be provision for the grant to continue to support the youth after their probation ends.

The project director reported, however, that CCDJA had been awarded grant funds of \$55,000 to help keep youth in subsidized work. There are 20 three-month subsidized employment slots for youth: 29 hours per week for youth 16 years old and older; 15 hours per week for 14 to 15 year olds. The staff hopes that employers will pick up the youth as permanent workers after the three months end. The project director also reports that probation violations are declining and that he believes recidivism will decline as well.

### **Technical Assistance**

The Ohio Education and Training Project staff attended the September 1999 and the February 2000 technical assistance conferences sponsored by DOL for the leadership of the YODP projects. Two conference calls of all the Category II site leaders also were held in 2000, and another was scheduled for early 2001. These calls have allowed the DOL, OJJDP, and site leaders to share what they know and address challenges they face. The project's leadership also has received bi-weekly telephone or e-mail inquiries from the technical assistance staff at Research and Evaluation Associates.

Three technical assistance site visits have been made to the Ohio Education and Training Project. The evaluations of each of these workshops have been positive.

- C In August 1999, the Research and Evaluation Associates technical assistance team visited the Mohican and DYC facilities, met the staff, and gathered baseline data.
- C In May 2000, a consultant facilitated a workshop on implementing School-to-Work Systems at both the Mohican and the DYC facilities.
- C In October 2000, a consultant gave a workshop on the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) Model to all the YODP leadership in Cuyahoga County.

Before each TA event, extensive conversations were held with project leadership and TA consultants, so that workshops were tailored to specific site needs. A second IAP workshop is planned for case workers working with YODP youth in early 2001.

### **Sustainability**

Parts of the Ohio project will continue after project funding ends. The two correctional facilities will continue to operate and Information Technology classes will continue to be taught there because of the funding provided to initiate them. The aftercare portion of the program will return to the pre-grant-award status, unless grant funds are obtained to maintain the intensive aftercare, training, and case management services.

Teachers reported that before the grant few youth returned to formal schooling after their release. Of those who found work, most got jobs with fast-food restaurants or similar companies. It is not possible to envision what employability and work-related job skills training will continue after the project ends. It has been difficult to maintain motivation and participation. There seems, however, to be the budding of a relationship between youth returning to their communities from MYC and the LMM case manager and the aftercare specialist. It may be possible that some youth will stay connected with these two men, even after the project ends.

Even with the current youth in the program, it will be difficult to demonstrate the impact of the project. The youth are not a cohort; and youth receive services and training based on individual needs, sentence, and behavior while in a correctional facility. There is not a management information system for tracking youth once the grant funds are gone.

### **Lessons Learned**

The Ohio projects are developing a solid process to facilitate the transition of youth serving sentences in facilities back to their home communities. Both facilities are setting up a three-month plan for each youth returning to Cuyahoga County. And, there is increased communication between aftercare specialists at DTS and the staffs at residential facilities.

Back in Cuyahoga County youth now receive more intensive follow-up than had been available before the grant. The relationship between youth in Cleveland and the LMM case manager may become sustainable after the period of the grant. The staffs at the CCDJA and the regional DYS have developed a cooperative relationship that had not existed before the grant. The Relapse Prevention program serves both the younger youth at YDC and older youth at Mohican. Staffs at both facilities now use a common risk assessment instrument.

The transition back to Cuyahoga County began in June, but it was August 2000 before there were more than a handful of youth released to the county. There are aspects of the transition that are not in place or are not yet operating smoothly.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

1. The Ohio project is comprised of two sites. Both are different in design and different in target population.
2. MYC has a strong tracking system, but after release other service providers keep separate records. YDC does not have a strong MIS system, so tracking youth is especially difficult. The projects need to develop a project-specific database, if evaluation outcomes are to be examined and assessed.
3. Youth can easily become disengaged from the project once their probation ends. It might help if there were a stronger incentive system to keep them connected to services and treatment interventions.

4. Since youth are not finding jobs in IT positions, partner agencies should attempt to find them paid positions that would employ what they have learned until they are better prepared for more challenging work or personal activities that require IT skills.
5. Although the Ohio project is committed to developing IT skills, and these skills will be important for youth in any industry they enter, Ohio might explore other training that would prepare youth for industries which pay good wages and do not require a reliance on strong reading and math skills, such as laying fiber optic cable.
6. Although the partnership has increased communication among agencies offering services to the same target population, there remain communication issues that need to be addressed. An important issue is aligning the IT curriculum in Cuyahoga County with that of the two facilities.
7. Category II projects require development of operating partnerships, especially when youth are released back to their community. The projects are thus experiencing all the relationship-building issues during the second year of the grant that projects in other categories faced and addressed months earlier. The projects need technical assistance in communication, role definition, and operating procedures and styles.
8. The majority of the youth in the project are younger than most workforce participants. It will be several years before the project designers will be able to judge the impact of the intervention on the kind of jobs the youth will be able to obtain when they are age-eligible.

As in the case of many other projects in all three categories, youth who were interviewed mentioned that the promise of jobs at a decent wage was what drew them to and keeps them engaged with the project. Therefore, it is safe to induce that the model of crime prevention that ties employment training and placement is critical for these youth. And, as in the case of the other projects, time is a limiting factor. More of it may be required to demonstrate that the investment in education and training will result in more youth offenders or youth at risk of criminal involvement successfully transitioning to full-time employment.





## **Section IV**

### **CATEGORY III - COMMUNITY-WIDE COORDINATION PROJECTS**

#### **Introduction**

Project grantees in six medium-sized cities (Category III) were awarded approximately \$300,000 to focus on high poverty and high-crime communities. The design for the two-year project was for grantees to work with youth service providers to develop linkages that would strengthen the coordination of prevention and recovery services for youth offenders. More specifically, the grantees were:

- (1) to build upon existing employment and training, recreation, conflict resolution, and other youth crime, and gang prevention programs;
- (2) to establish alternative sentencing and community service options for youth offenders, especially those who have been gang members; and
- (3) to establish or continue gang suppression activities

To accomplish these tasks, the Statement of Work issued for Category III sites required grantees to design their projects in ways that would:

- C enhance existing education, training and employment services within their communities for youths who are in-school and those out-of-school;
- C establish linkages and partnerships with other service providers to develop a seamless system of services that addressed the needs of the targeted youth population;
- C reduce school dropout, gang involvement, drug and alcohol sales and abuse, teenage pregnancy, and other criminal activity and activities that lead to criminal behavior;
- C increase the number of youth entering full-time permanent employment, completing high school, entering institutions of higher learning, completing training, returning to school, and entering alternative learning facilities;
- C establish linkages with the local school system, law enforcement, social services agencies, community based organization, Job Training Partnership Act system and other services for youth;

- C include local community residents, parents, youth, local police, parole system, guardians, businesses, schools, faith based organizations, etc. in the development of decision-making involving the initiative;
- C expand existing program services and to initiate new employment, training, education, and support services;
- C utilize the Federal Bonding Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program to facilitate employment for project participants;
- C maintain a quality staff, develop with partners and community members a well-conceived implementation plan with emphasis on development of a system that addresses the needs of the targeted youth population; and
- C provide core services in a facility that is clean, attractive, well lighted, fully equipped, ventilated, with easy access for clients, and large enough to accommodate some staff from some partnerships and most of the project's core activities with a welcoming atmosphere.

## **Findings**

To assess the ability of grantees to address these requirements, site visits were made to the six Category III sites. The findings in this section consider nine areas of interest:

- C Planning for the project;
- C Establishment of effective linkages and partnerships;
- C Organizational issues;
- C Training, employment, gang suppression activities;
- C Collateral services;
- C Staff recruitment;
- C Target population recruitment;
- C Technical assistance; and
- C Sustainability of the project after the grant ends.

Reports for each Category III site, which consider these areas of interest more fully, can be found in Appendix D.

## **Planning for the Project**

---

## **Section IV - Category III - Community-Wide Coordination Projects**

Site visits for the six Category III sites found that planning for the projects by the grantees was adequate. In formulating their plans for the demonstration projects, evidence suggests that project planners adequately designed their projects to accomplish the goals specified for Category III projects and to meet requirements set forth in the USDOL Statement of Work.

Table 13 indicates planning responsibilities the project initiated for the six sites. Four of the projects involved two agencies in the planning phase. With the exception of Rockford, the projects included in the project's planning phase both public and private agencies and organizations.

It should be noted that involvement of youth in the planning for the demonstration project varied among the six Category III sites. In all, youth and their parents were asked to participate in planning for the project at only two sites: Bakersfield and Rockford. It is difficult to say with certainty, however, how important youth and parental involvement in youth-oriented projects has been as a contributing factor in the success of the projects. The project in Rockford, which involved youth in the planning, is strong and well established while the project in Bakersfield, which also included youth in the planning, is struggling. Several sites have attempted to correct this problem. As a result of requirements under the Workforce Investment Act, Youth Councils now have some say in how the demonstration projects are run. Both the program manager in Knoxville and the director of operations at the Office of Juvenile Studies, University of West Florida in Pensacola also serve as members on youth councils in their areas.

### **Establishment of Effective Linkages and Partnerships**

To a large extent, and with only minor exceptions, the six Category III sites have followed the original project designs they outlined in their applications for the demonstration project grants. They also have attempted to establish important linkages in support of project goals. All projects were to build upon existing systems, which included both core and collateral services provided youth. Some existing systems, however, were more developed than others and, as a result, were able to progress more quickly.

Strong systems, for example, already were in place in Minneapolis, Knoxville, and Rockford. Implementing the projects in these locations required only the addition of workers to supplement much of the work already being done in these cities.

Systems in Bakersfield, Clifton, and Pensacola, however, were less fully developed. This situation has caused the projects to struggle to gain and maintain momentum from the beginning. As a result, the lead agencies of these three projects have found it difficult, in varying degrees, to recruit both partners and clients.

Recruiting schools as partners, for example, has been a special problem for project officials in Pensacola, apparently because of the school system's policies on removing disruptive students. Likewise, the Minneapolis and Knoxville projects, for political and other various reasons, have struggled to establish formal partnerships with the traditional school system. Project officials in Clifton, however, have developed close ties with public schools. (See Table 13, p. 87).



---

#### ***Section IV - Category III - Community-Wide Coordination Projects***

Several of the projects have successfully worked with the juvenile justice system. Referrals to the projects frequently are made by judges and probation officers. Of the six Category III sites, these projects are more directly involved with the juvenile justice system:

- C In Pensacola, the project's lead agency is also responsible for a medium-security confinement facility for youth. The design of the project was to expose youths in the facility to the Building Success project in hopes that when they are released from confinement they would enroll in the demonstration project. So far, however, only a few youth have participated after their release.
- C In Minneapolis, project officials are working to build a partnership with the local medium-confinement facility, which they consider an important possible source of clients. Referrals also come from the city's truancy team, diversion programs, juvenile and drug courts, and alternative schools.
- C In Clifton, project officials are also probation officers who feed clients into the project.
- C In Knoxville, project officials also work for the city's Truancy Center, which has immediate access to vulnerable youth. Youth picked up for truancy are assessed by the Truancy Center and, if appropriate, are funneled into the project.

The six projects have encountered several barriers involving partners that have affected the effectiveness of the projects and hampered their ability to serve the targeted youth. Many employers in most locations, for example, appear unwilling to hire youth who have criminal records or lack skills and education. Other employers also are willing to consider project participants only for low-paying and menial jobs, justifying their unwillingness on the lack of educational attainment and low-skill levels of project clients.

The project in Rockford appeared the least aggressive of the six in developing new partnerships aimed specifically for enhancing the demonstration project. Since YouthBuild Rockford received its YODP grant, it has established only one new partnership with a non-profit organization that specialized in vocational programs for low-income and unemployed adults with disabilities.

To a large extent, the six lead agencies serve as the primary coordinators and managers of the projects while also providing some basic services to clients. Coordination responsibilities of the projects generally include recruiting employers and other partners that provide various basic, training, educational, and collateral services to project clients. Evaluators visiting the demonstration projects generally have found that the efforts by lead agencies at all six sites to fulfill their coordination responsibilities were adequate.

The cities where the six projects operate generally also have many programs aimed at youth who are at risk of becoming court involved. The projects, when possible, attempt to take advantage of these existing programs and services aimed at youth to supplement the projects. In Knoxville, for example, churches and other agencies are active in the target areas and offer diversionary and aftercare

programs. Minneapolis also has an array of available programs aimed at youths. The YMCA offers memberships to clients of the Bakersfield and Rockford projects. It appears that the communities offering the least number of youth-oriented programs that supplement the demonstration projects are Pensacola and Clifton.

Table 14 outlines the division of responsibilities among project partners at the six demonstration sites. The lead partner at all six Category III sites is responsible for intake and assessment, case management, soft skills training, job search support, job placement, and post-placement follow-up. Other services, including academic, and collateral services (barrier removal such as tattoo removal), are generally handled by other partners or agencies. Both Rockford and Pensacola projects provide vocational training.

**Table 14: Service Providers in Category III Sites**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Bakersfield, California</b>	<b>Clifton, New Jersey</b>	<b>Knoxville, Tennessee</b>	<b>Minneapolis, Minnesota</b>	<b>Pensacola, Florida</b>	<b>Rockford, Illinois</b>
<b>Intake and Assessment</b>	ETR	Probation Division	Truancy Center	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
<b>Case Management</b>	ETR	Probation Division	Truancy Center	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
<b>Diploma or GED Help</b>	Other Agencies, Schools	Other Agencies, Schools	Truancy Center	EAC	Other Agencies, Schools	Other Agencies
<b>Soft and Life Skills Training</b>	ETR	Probation Division	Truancy Center	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
<b>Barrier Removal</b>	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies
<b>Vocational Education</b>	Other Agencies, Schools	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	OJS	YouthBuild
<b>Job Search Support</b>	ETR	Probation Division	OJS	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
<b>Job Placement Support</b>	ETR	Probation Division	OJS	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
<b>Post-placement follow-up</b>	ETR	Probation Division	OJS	EAC	OJS	YouthBuild
<b>Substance Abuse and Person Counseling</b>	Other Agencies	Probation Division, Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	Other Agencies	YouthBuild and Other Agencies

## **Organizational Issues**

The importance of strong, clear, and consistent leadership from a central organization, as well as willingness to share it with partners, cannot be dismissed in giving direction and coherence to the projects. In general, all six Category III projects offered such leadership, although some experienced, nonetheless, difficulties in building momentum for the project and then sustaining it. It appears that success of the projects, however, depended less upon the nature of leadership than the particularities of place and circumstance (this aspect is more fully discussed in the Lessons Learned section of the report).

## **Training, Employment, Gang Suppression Activities**

The most successful models for building competencies to prepare youths for life, worthwhile work, and transition into careers are those that have the proper mixture of several key elements that influence their growth and development in positive ways. These components include:

- C community-wide collaboration;
- C employment and training programs;
- C alternative sentencing and community service programs; and
- C anti-gang initiatives.

In general, evaluators concluded that the efforts of the six Category III sites have made important strides toward creating significant and effective amalgams of these components. As a result, the six projects made contributions toward improving the lives of the target youth they have reached in their communities. (Factors that account for the successes of these efforts, as well as barriers that have hampered the efforts of the projects, are discussed in the Lessons Learned section of the report.)

While they attempted to establish and enhance linkages with partners, all six Category III sites also provided some basic services to target groups. As specified in the Statement of Work, officials at the six Category III sites implemented these services in ways that sought to:

- C reduce school dropout rate, gang involvement, drug and alcohol sales and abuse, teenage pregnancy, and other criminal activity and activities that lead to criminal behavior;
- C increase the number of youth entering full-time permanent employment, completing high school, entering institutions of higher learning, completing training, returning to school, entering alternative learning facilities;

For the most part, the services that the projects provided clients focused on developing skills, knowledge, and competencies that lead to continued education, jobs, and careers for youths. The level and intensity of services offered clients varied somewhat among sites, however, depending upon the



capabilities, experience, and efforts of case workers at each site. In general, all of the sites offered clients assessments, pre-vocational skills, and life-skills training. Clients needing specialized help, such as drug or alcohol counseling, were referred to partners or other agencies providing these services.

Some projects were uncertain about whether their efforts should focus more on building of partnerships and linkages or helping place clients directly into jobs. In general, all sites initially believed that their projects would be evaluated primarily on their ability to place clients into jobs. Evaluators found that those sites that emphasized job placement, or delivery of services, at the expense of the more important task of building and enhancing partnerships were generally less successful than those that balanced these efforts. Sites that had difficulties were Bakersfield, Clifton, and Pensacola. In addition to assessment, case workers also attempted to help qualified clients find appropriate employment. Case workers at all project sites noted unanticipated and serious problems in doing this. These include the lack of skills, poor attitude, lack of motivation, and lack of educational attainment among many project clients. The distance to good paying jobs, which increasingly are found outside inner-cities and in the more-distant suburbs, also dissuaded many project clients from seeking work, according to case workers at all sites.

Placing clients in jobs indeed has proved difficult for all six projects. Although the economy of cities where the projects are located was generally good, many good paying jobs require well-educated and skilled workers. Many project clients, however, are unskilled youths coming from poor and disadvantaged families. In addition, in Minneapolis many clients are recent immigrants who have not yet developed adequate English-language skills.

The difficulty for all projects was to find effective ways to provide adequate services that provided remedial writing and mathematics skills to help youth become more employable. In Pensacola, for example, helping targeted youth become employable has proved a monumental problem for both the project and other agencies. Many youth who have been released from confinement are low functioning and are reported to need special education classes. A key problem is what to do with those under 18 who reject formal schooling and have low aptitudes, but are prohibited or discouraged from seeking employment. Officials estimate that 35 to 45 percent of youths involved in the juvenile justice system there have these problems.

A major requirement of the SGA for the Youth Offender Demonstration Project Grant was for sites to establish or continue gang suppression activities in support of the project. The reluctance of youth to identify themselves as gang members, combined with strong anti-gang efforts in some cities that have driven gang activity underground, left the projects facing difficulties in accomplishing this task. This was the case in Pensacola, Knoxville, and Minneapolis. In short, this is an aspect of the project that has been neglected, although it can be argued that the services the projects offered in their own right serve as an important anti-gang effort.

Gang activity, nonetheless, has affected many of the projects significantly. In Bakersfield, for example, the high level of gang activity in the target area has affected project outcomes. Gang affiliation among the target population has influenced whether a youth is willing to travel to the site where the project is located. To counter this effect, case workers attempt to meet students

in relatively safe spaces, such as in schools, where they provide job preparation services. The threat of gang violence also affects a client's access to public transportation in neighborhoods where many youth live. Both Pensacola and Minneapolis projects, however, operate in parts of the city that are generally gang neutral.

Table 15 presents an overview of outcomes that have resulted from the efforts of the six projects. It should be noted that a complete assessment of the outcomes is not possible at this time. A lack of a uniform reporting system has made it difficult for evaluators to piece together an accurate count of dispositions/outcomes. The data reported in the table represents a compilation of information provided by each site as well as data collected by evaluators during their site visits and from other reports.

It also should be noted that only one site, Knoxville, extensively targeted the Job Corps as a possible source of training. In all, 11 of Project Nova's clients joined the Job Corps. Sites that primarily receive clients through the justice system—Pensacola, Minneapolis, and Clifton—have not focused either the military or Job Corps as sources of training, because they place restrictions on offenders. The military, in general, will not accept youths who lack a high school diploma or GED or have criminal records.

### **Collateral Services**

In the case of Category III sites, collateral services are services for clients other than soft skills, pre-employment, basic, vocational, and educational training. These services, for example, included tattoo removal, help in finding adequate work clothes, and counseling for personal and family problems. In general, the six Category III sites were ill equipped to provide collateral services and chose instead to refer clients who needed them to other more-specialized agencies.

There were some exceptions, however. YouthBuild in Rockford and the Probation Division, which runs the project in Clifton, offered substance abuse and personal counseling to clients. And, several project officials used their personal transportation and personal time to help clients obtain a driver's license, birth certificates, attend training sessions and job interviews.

### **Staff Recruitment**

Evaluators identified several themes concerning the recruitment of staff members shared by the six projects. These included, in general:

- C Grantees used YODP funds to add staff to existing organizational structures. Doing this ensured continuity within the organizations and ensured that pay and responsibilities were commensurate with other workers holding similar positions. Most of the sites added either one or two full-time positions for the project.
- C The recruitment process the projects used depended upon local labor market conditions. In some instances, for example, the low unemployment rate made it difficult to hire highly qualified personnel for the project. One project position in

(See Table 15, p. 88).

---

## ***Section IV - Category III - Community-Wide Coordination Projects***

Pensacola was discontinued after project officials were unable to fill the position. Also, until recently, the Bakersfield project was unable to fill a counselor's position. Several projects also sometimes were forced to hire relatively inexperienced, but usually committed, younger workers.

- C Older, experienced staff members working with well-established organizations that deal with youths appeared to have less turnover and appeared to be more effective in dealing with clients. The Knoxville staff serves as an example of how experience, knowledge, and continuity among a staff can enhance a project's effectiveness.
- C Project coordinators at all sites were seasoned and experienced.
- C Staff turnover appeared to be a distraction for several sites. In Minneapolis the project coordinator left after a year as did the project coordinator in Pensacola. Key members in Clifton, Bakersfield, Knoxville also resigned and required replacement.

### **Target Population Recruitment**

Each site targeted clients differently and received them from a variety of sources. More specifically:

- C The juvenile justice system served as a primary provider of clients in Bakersfield, Clifton, Minneapolis, and Pensacola.
- C Both Knoxville and Rockford focused primarily on recruiting youth who were at risk of court involvement. In Knoxville, clients came primarily through the Truancy Center while clients in Rockford were recruited through the flyers that were distributed door-to-door.
- C Three sites dealt primarily with younger youth (under 18): Bakersfield (100%), Knoxville (76%), and Minneapolis (61%).
- C Project officials often had to compete with other youth-oriented programs for clients. Probation officers who had power over clients often weighed the advantages of assigning youth to the demonstration projects instead of other similar programs that provided similar services.

Table 16 presents a general, although incomplete, demographic portrayal of Category III clients. A uniform reporting system was not in place to provide sufficient data. Therefore, it was impractical in this report to discuss whether clients who sought project services were more likely to experience positive outcomes than those who were referred to the project through the juvenile justice system or participated reluctantly.

Limited anecdotal evidence from project counselors with some projects (Knoxville and Minneapolis), however, suggests that Category III volunteers were somewhat more eager to attend training and seek employment. It also should be noted that the data in the table were (See Table 16, p. 89)



collected both by evaluators during their site visits and information that the sites reported to the technical assistance team at Research and Evaluation Associates.

## **Technical Assistance**

In accordance with its contract with the U.S. Department of Labor, Research and Evaluation Associates was not initially authorized to conduct more than an initial visit to Category III sites. Subsequently, authorization was given for an additional technical assistance site visit to each Category III project. Research and Evaluation Associates, nonetheless, held scheduled bi-weekly telephone conversations with the sites. Also, technical assistance was provided via telephone and email when projects requested it. In addition, the team collaborated with the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) to arrange for specialized technical assistance to be delivered by NYEC consultants. The consultants facilitated on-site sessions for Bakersfield, Clifton, and Rockford projects.

Table 17 shows dates and services provided to sites by the Research and Evaluation Technical Assistance Team and consultants.

## **Sustainability**

It appears that sustaining the projects after grant funding ends poses a significant problem for some projects. It also appears that projects associated with well-established organizations will continue while those projects that essentially were built from the ground face difficulty remaining in operation.

Plans for sustaining the projects varied among the six Category III sites. Specifically, the thoughts of project officials about the prospects for continuing the project after the demonstration project ends, and their efforts, are:

- C Bakersfield:** Project officials are attempting to build contacts with various agencies to ensure continuation of the project. Lack of funding, however, posed an immediate problem. Although currently there are no funds available to support continuation of the project, project officials are searching for additional funding sources, including through local Workforce Investment Boards.
- C Clifton:** Project officials are not optimistic about continuation of the project. The project's strong ties with other agencies, including the Adult School and the Passaic County Workforce Development Center may enhance the potential for continuation of some aspects of the project, however.
- C Knoxville:** There is a mild degree of uncertainty about continuation of the project once grant funds end. The project staff is part of a large community agency that is well funded. Project staff, nonetheless, are seeking additional grants to allow continuation of the project.

(See Table 17, p. 90)

- C Minneapolis:** Sustainability does not appear to be a problem, primarily because the project's lead agency is part of a large well-established non-profit organization that offers many different youth services throughout the city. The project is well integrated into the existing organizational framework. Continuation of the project should require only a minimal amount of additional financial support. The project's parent organization already is seeking additional funding sources, including funds through local Workforce Investment Boards.
  
- C Pensacola:** University of West Florida officials are seeking ways to bind the Building Success project with its Advanced Aftercare program and Blackwater confinement facility after the demonstration project ends. Officials anticipate the university will receive additional funds through grants to support the project.
  
- C Rockford:** YouthBuild is a well-established and successful program and officials believe that components of the project will continue after the grant ends. YouthBuild's parent organization has received about \$80,000 in support of its efforts with project clients through the Workforce Investment Act.

## **Lessons Learned**

The six Category III Youth Offender Demonstration Projects were still evolving when this report was written. Only when the projects have ended, and the final evaluation site visits are completed, will it be possible to state more explicitly and confidently what lessons have been learned from the demonstration projects. It is possible at this time, nonetheless, to tentatively identify, and discuss, several factors that *appear* to have contributed to the success of the projects. It also is possible to consider barriers that *appear* to have hindered project officials as they have attempted to make each of their projects effective. These should serve as lessons learned for similar future projects.

## **Factors Contributing to Success**

Several factors appear significant in explaining the initial accomplishments of the six Category III projects. These include the requirements for:

- C Clear vision for project;
  
- C Broad community support;
  
- C Shared leadership;
  
- C Ability to deliver benefits to clients;
  
- C Committed staff; and



- C Specialized technical assistance.

### **Clear Vision for Project**

Research shows that projects that are well-conceived and based on sound theoretical grounds are more likely to succeed. Planners and managers of the six projects understood and attempted to incorporate into their projects practices and principles that have been shown to reduce youth delinquency and crime while developing the potential of youth to lead happy and productive lives. In general, examinations of the Category III projects show that adherence to these principles, which can be encapsulated as “a clear vision,” is essential for creating effective programs such as the Youth Offender Demonstration Project.

To reach the project's goals, all six of the Category III grantees designed their projects to build upon existing programs by serving as enhancements. In addition, the projects took it upon themselves to incorporate other key components of tested theories that have shown to be essential to successful youth crime prevention efforts.

The services provided directly by the agencies running the projects were designed to prepare youth:

- C for increased responsibility;
- C to facilitate their interaction and involvement in their community;
- C to develop support system that included families, peers, schools, and employers;
- C to develop new resources and supports where needed; and
- C to monitor and assist them in developing their abilities to lead happy and productive lives.

To reach these goals, each of the six projects provided clients:

- C Assessment, classification services;
- C Individual case management that incorporated a family and community perspectives; and
- C Service brokerage that included community resources and linkage with social and employment networks.

**Lesson learned:** Successful projects have a clear vision of what they are to do. Their vision is based on tested and successful theories and principles.

### **Broad Community Support**

The experiences of demonstration projects also reinforced the importance for projects to have broad-based community support, if they are to succeed. For juvenile crime prevention to work there must be a commitment and sense of ownership by major agencies and interests that play a role in these efforts. Especially important is support from courts, institutions, aftercare, education, child mental health and social service, employment and vocational training, and substance abuse treatment.

Three of the projects—Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford—had in place well-established partnerships and relationships with public, private, and non-profit agencies and organizations that provided these services. The Knoxville project, for example, benefited from the partnership network developed by the Truancy Center. Likewise, Minneapolis benefited from the partnerships developed by its large and well-established parent organization, the Employment Action Center that specialized in providing services, including job placement, to at-risk youths and adults in jobs. In Rockford, the project essentially became a component of its well-established YouthBuild project and was able to take advantage of its services and funding streams, including an additional \$80,000 grant it received in support of the demonstration project.

The other three projects—Bakersfield, Clifton, and Pensacola—did not have strong partnerships and community support in place before their start-up. As a result, these projects struggled with developing and nurturing new partnerships and arrangements with other agencies to provide some services to clients.

Pensacola, which had the fewest number of participants, is important to consider because, to a large extent, it relied upon partnerships that were self-contained within the Office of Juvenile Studies at the University of West Florida. These included the OJS aftercare program and Blackwater Creek Career Center, a medium-security confinement facility for youth.

**Lesson learned:** Successful projects have broad-based community support and rely on partnerships with private, public, and non-profit agencies and organizations.

### **Shared Leadership**

In successful programs, agencies and their staffs share both the leadership and credit. If programs fail to follow these two basic axioms the philosophy and purpose of a program is undermined and the program may fail or be less successful. It appears that the more successful Category III projects took these points to heart. Those projects that partnered with other agencies and organizations and shared ideas, philosophies, approaches, and responsibilities were more effective than those that did not.

On face value it appears that a project's organizational arrangement was an important factor in its success. In the case of four projects, broad oversight responsibility was maintained by the organization awarded the demonstration grant, but day-to-day management responsibilities were subcontracted to another organization. These included:

- C Knoxville where the city's Private Industry Council subcontracted with KCDC, a large non-profit organization, that also runs the Truancy Center;

- C Minneapolis where the city's Metropolitan Employment and Training Program subcontracted to the Employment Action Center (EAC);
- C Rockford where the Rock River Training Corporation subcontracted to YouthBuild and its parent organization; and
- C Pensacola where the Escarosa Regional Workforce Development Board subcontracted to the Office of Juvenile Studies, University of West Florida.

Three of the projects organized in this way generally succeeded in reaching their goals. These were Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford. Two of the remaining three sites, however, did not subcontract responsibility for the projects. These were Bakersfield and Clifton, where the Employer's Training Resource and the Passaic Vicinage Probation Division, respectively, retained control of the projects.

It appears, however, that a project's success depends more on the particularities of place and a variety of circumstances than upon leadership within an agency or its organizational arrangement. It may be that organizational design is less important to a Category III program's success than the existence of a partnership network that shares the project's leadership role.

**Lesson learned:** Organizations that have to focus a great deal of their efforts on creating partnerships and have not shared leadership with other partners experience difficulties building and maintaining momentum for their projects.

### **Ability to Deliver Benefits to Clients**

An important part of any project is its ability to deliver something of value to its clients. That task was a major challenge faced by many of the six Category III as they attempted to enhance linkages with organizations that provided needed services to clients.

In general, the six projects attempted, in good faith, to conform to the tasks and responsibilities specified in the USDOL Statement of Work that aimed at this goal. More specifically, they sought to enhance existing education, training, and employment services provided in the local community to both youth who were in school and those who were out of school. And, as specified in the Statement of Work, they attempted to establish linkages/partnerships with other service providers to develop a seamless system of services that addressed the needs of the youth population in the targeted communities.

The manner in which all six grantees approached these responsibilities after they received their YODP grants, for the most part, proved both logical and adequate, although disparate in their intensity. The three most successful agencies realized that effective delivery of services to clients was a shared responsibility that depended upon their partners.

---

## ***Section IV - Category III - Community-Wide Coordination Projects***

For the most part, the projects were properly organized and adequately staffed with competent and skilled workers. Implementation proceeded according to designs specified in the original grant applications, although in some instances there were significant delays before clients were recruited. In some cases, however, sites did not closely follow implementation plans that they had outlined early on and instead focused their efforts at finding job for clients.

One other aspect that influenced the success of the projects' ability to deliver benefits to clients concerned location of project facilities. Ideally facilities are convenient and accessible to clients. The locations of five Category III projects are, to a large degree, conducive to the efficient and effective operation of the demonstration projects. The facilities of five project sites, Bakersfield, Clifton, Knoxville, Minneapolis, and Rockford are in close proximity to the target populations. The sites are situated either within or on the fringe of targeted neighborhoods and provide participants easy access to project services.

The location of the Pensacola facility, however, is an exception. It is situated on the suburban campus of the University of West Florida in Pensacola and about 10 miles from the target population. This poses a major barrier to recruitment of youth into the project. Many project participants found it difficult to find transportation to the facility. This problem persisted until student caseworkers volunteered to drive clients to and from training. There are, however, some advantages to having the project situated on the UWF campus: it is considered "gang neutral" and the university has a well-equipped wood working facility for clients to use. It appears, nonetheless, that location of the Pensacola project has hindered the project in reaching its goal of serving 45 clients a year.

As specified in the Statement of Work, the projects generally are operated in facilities that were clean, attractive, well lighted, fully equipped, ventilated, and provide participants easy access. They also adequately accommodated staff and some partners as well as core program activities, and they presented a welcoming atmosphere to youth.

**Lesson learned:** More successful Category III projects focused on the delivery of services primarily by enhancing partnerships with other agencies and organizations. This was the case, even when they provided services directly to clients. In addition, it is important that project facilities be situated close to the populations they target and serve.

### **Committed Staff**

A project's success depends upon the commitment and hard work of its staff members. In general, the staffs of all six projects appeared committed to their work and eager to help clients with their education, training, personal and social development, and in helping them find jobs. Project coordinators in Minneapolis, Clifton, and Knoxville had large amounts of first-hand experience involving youth who are at risk of court involvement. The project coordinators in Clifton are juvenile probation officers; the coordinator in Knoxville also runs the Truancy Center; and the project coordinator in Minneapolis is a former police officer who has 10 years' experience working with troubled youth.

Although staff members at some sites were inexperienced and relatively young they demonstrated eagerness for their jobs. Both seasoned and inexperienced workers also showed a willingness to use their personal time outside of work hours and sometimes their personal resources to help clients succeed. For the most part, the staffs at all six projects related well to their clients and took personal interest in them. Case workers in Minneapolis and Knoxville, for example, closely monitored the progress of their clients and took extraordinary actions to ensure that they remained on track, attended training, and showed up for job interviews.

**Lesson learned:** A highly motivated and dedicated staff, whether seasoned or green, is an important asset and magnifies a project's efforts to serve clients. This kind of a staff is essential to a program's success.

### **Specialized Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance serves as a valuable improvement and feedback mechanism for new projects and programs.

Specialized technical assistance plans were developed independently for each project and focused on each project's specific needs. During the initial site visits, the consulting team met with community stakeholders, discussed project implementation and available technical assistance. Additional technical assistance, however, was provided bi-weekly by the consulting team via telephone and e-mail. The sites used the assistance to help them devise ways to expand existing services, develop strategies to build community capacity, and strengthen relationships with other community organizations/agencies providing services for youth. In addition, the sites effectively used consultants from the National Youth Employment Coalition to augment the assistance provided by the technical assistance team.

**Lesson learned:** The demonstration projects found technical assistance, although limited, helpful, useful—and necessary. In similar future projects it is essential that sites be authorized and provided on-site TA to help ensure that the projects remain on track and receive help when they encounter problems. In the end, these efforts will enhance the abilities of the projects to fulfill project goals and objectives and become sustainable.

### **Organizational Barriers and Challenges**

While the six Category III projects experienced some successes, they also encountered several organizational barriers and challenges that affected the effectiveness of their projects. They also learned from the difficulties they faced. These difficulties included:

- C Lack of stable funding commitments;
- C Confusion about measures of success; and
- C Lack of uniform reporting system.

### **Lack of Funding Commitments**

Obtaining funds for continuing the projects after grant funding ends posed a serious problem for all Category III sites. Even the sites that appeared to be the most secure and had the greatest chances of being sustained expressed some anxiety over having to find additional funding sources to continue in operation. In the case of Knoxville, for example, the program manager was uncertain whether to continue accepting clients into the project because he feared funding would end when clients were in the middle of training. In Clifton, funds for the project's educational component have run out and the project is no longer providing that service.

In general, the anxiety expressed by the sites is understandable. Accepting funds may prove beneficial in the short run, but in the long run may place what has become a worthwhile service in a precarious position. In short, it has been difficult for sites to fully come to grips with the fact that the YODP is a pilot project, an experiment so to speak, that was designed to provide lessons learned, rather than serve as the core of a new full-fledged program. Further confusing the matter was the stated goal that projects should seek ways to sustain the services once the pilot ended. There is no easy solution to this situation, perhaps other than educating the sites about how to find ways to seek out future funding streams and the importance of building links and partnerships that they may provide.

**Lesson learned:** From the beginning, projects need to understand the importance of seeking technical assistance that will help them learn ways to secure funding streams that will ensure that their services are sustained after grant funding ends.

### **Confusion About Measures of Success**

The six sites expressed confusion about how evaluators would measure their efforts and determine whether they were successful. It appears that the sites assumed they would be evaluated on their ability to place clients in jobs, rather than on their ability to develop and enhance linkages and partnerships. This was the case even though the Statement of Work clearly specified the importance of building linkages and partnerships. The result, nonetheless, led toward goal displacement in which some sites tended to concentrate too much of their effort on the wrong task and neglected the primary thrust of the project.

**Lesson learned:** From the beginning, projects must understand clearly their responsibilities required by a grant. Additional on-site technical assistance may be necessary to ensure that the projects remain on track and are focused on their primary tasks.

### **Lack of Uniform Reporting Systems**

A serious problem for all six projects was the lack of a uniform reporting system. Although each of the sites maintained its own records, the reports that they submitted provided data in different formats. The reports also did not uniformly classify participants according to services they received, demographic information, status in the project, or other information that helps determine project performance and whether the project is meeting expectations, goals, and objectives.

**Lesson learned:** Reporting requirements for projects should be established and specified clearly.

### **Recommendations, Category III**

Evaluators offered several recommendations for all six Category III projects. These included:

1. Give greater focus to developing community-wide partnerships, rather than providing employment services directly. Not only is this a requirement of the demonstration project grant, but it also is a primary means for the services to become sustainable after grant funding ends. Building and enhancing partnerships also will ensure that gaps in services provided to clients are filled.
2. Give special attention to strengthening partnerships with the Juvenile Justice System. The projects must better educate prosecutors, judges, and probation officers that their projects can serve as important tools in community efforts to reduce youthful crime and recidivism.
3. Increase their knowledge of the Workforce Investment Act and the opportunities it provides youth. One-Stop Centers and closer involvement of Youth Councils can help the projects more effectively deliver services to their target populations. In addition, closer involvement with Workforce Investment Boards may help them secure funding for the projects and thus make them sustainable after the grant ends.

In addition, evaluators offer these more specific recommendations for each of the sites:

For Bakersfield, California:

1. Project case workers should continue their efforts to counter the effects of gangs within target neighborhoods. To do this, they should continue to meet clients and provide them job readiness services in relatively safe spaces such as in schools.
2. The project should seek technical assistance that will help them deal with the gang affiliation of clients. The project has done well in providing service to the target population under extreme circumstances, especially considering the high levels of gang activity in areas they serve. The project, nonetheless, should consider becoming, in addition to a provider of direct services to clients, a provider of some collateral services.
3. Although the project has been instrumental in bringing the target population to the attention of area agencies that serve youth who are at risk of court involvement, it has not focused on youths involved in the criminal justice system. The project also should attempt to serve as a conduit by serving as a means to establish a participant's eligibility for services offered by partner agencies.

---

**Section IV - Category III - Community-Wide Coordination Projects**

For Clifton, New Jersey:

1. Recruitment of clients into the project should be discontinued and the project coordinator should focus her attention on doing follow-ups of clients enrolled in the project.
2. Project officials should give priority to the task of collecting consistent data on participants, particularly on whether they are holding or seeking employment and whether they are enrolled in educational programs.
3. The project should develop some type of educational component. This responsibility, however, should not be the task of the project coordinator who should focus on her efforts as the project's job developer.
4. The project should seek technical assistance on how it can help its clients find employment.

For Knoxville, Tennessee:

1. The project should develop a closer partnership with schools by convincing school officials that the project does not seek to compete with programs they have in place.
2. The project should seek to establish memoranda of agreement, rather than depend upon verbal agreements with partners. This would prevent disruption of services and misunderstanding should project officials leave the project.

For Minneapolis, Minnesota:

1. The project should intensify its efforts to improve its partnership with Hennepin County Home School, a medium-security confinement facility that also is a high school. The school has the potential of serving as a primary source of project participants.

For Pensacola, Florida:

1. The project should expand its recruitment efforts outside of the Office of Juvenile Studies.
2. The project should seek the participation of additional partners, especially employers.
3. The project should explore more effective ways of overcoming the distance between services and the neighborhood where the youth reside.

For Rockford, Illinois:



1. The project should seek technical assistance on how to address drug abuse problem among clients, especially on how to combat the negative effect it has on placement of clients into jobs.

## **Summary**

The demonstration projects are now one year old and have entered into their second year of operation. The projects already have in place capable staffs and workable and efficient systems for delivering some basic services to clients. During the next year the projects will have another opportunity to create new partnerships, develop further those that already exist, and to refine their organizational, operating, and feedback systems. If they focus on these tasks, they will be able to serve and help an even a larger number of youth while making significant contributions to the development of more effective ways that lead them toward worthwhile lives, productive work, and long-term careers. Focusing on these tasks also may help the sites find ways to sustain their efforts after grant funding ends.

## REFERENCES

Howell, J. (Ed.) (1995). Guide for implementing the comprehensive strategy for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

Steiner, P. (February 1994). Delinquency Prevention. (Fact Sheet No. 6). Washington, D.C.: U.S. DOJ, OJJDP.

Benson, P. L. Galbraith, M.A. and Espeland, P. (1995). What kids need to succeed: proven ways to raise good kids. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute and Free Spirit Press, Inc.

Fray, H. E. (April 1999). Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth: An Overview. OJJDP Fact Sheet #102.

Bazemore, G., and Umbreit, M. (Oct. 1994). Balanced and Restorative Justice: Program Summary. OJJDP.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. (March 1999). Reducing youth gang violence in Urban areas: one community's effort. On Good Authority, Vol. 2, No. 5.

National Institute of Justice Research Review. (Dec. 1998). Reintegrating juvenile offenders into the community: OJJDP's Intensive Community-Based Aftercare Demonstration Program. Author.

Stufflebeam, D.L. and Shinkfield, A.J. (1985) Systematic Evaluation. Hingham, MA: Klumer Academic Publishers.

Granger, Robert C.(1999). "Establishing Causality in Evaluations of Comprehensive Community Initiatives," in New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives, Volume 2: Theory, Measurement and Analysis. The Aspen Institute.



**Table 6. Collaborators in the Category I Youth Offender Demonstration Projects**

<b>Collaborators</b>	<b>Denver</b>	<b>Houston</b>	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>Richmond, CA</b>	<b>Seattle</b>
Fee for Service		Community College of Houston		Contra Costa Community College Adult School, Subsidized Work Experience Organizations.	Opportunity Skyways, South Seattle Community College, YouthBuild
Unfunded Collaborators	Denver Juvenile Court, Probation Department, Denver Gang Coalition, Families	Harris County Courts, Texas Youth Authority, Houston Independent School District, Youth Opportunities, Harris County Probation, Houston Police Department, MAGO, One-Stop Centers	Probation Department	CC County Courts, West Contra Costa School District, Police Department, Safe Futures	Department of Juvenile Justice, White Center Chamber of Commerce, Highline School District: Evergreen High School, Families

**Table 12. Current Status of Clients, Category II Site (Ohio)**

Outcomes	Mohican Youth Center *		Youth Development Center *	
	Pre-release	Post Release	Pre-release	Post Release
Enrollment Goal	None Specified		None Specified	
Total Enrollment	27	9	139	31
Employment Subsidized		4		10
Employment Unsubsidized	NR		NR	
Military	0		0	
Dropped	NR		1	
In School	27	NR	139	6
Completed Education		5		
Incarcerated		1		3
Job Corps		0		
Moved		1		NR
Training/Pre-employment		3		14
GED Enrollment		4		
Referred to Services		NR		5
Being Assessed	23	9	139	31
Follow-up Services		7		31
IT Training	27	3		13
Residential Treatment		1		0

\* As of October 18, 2000

**Table 13: Planning for YODP Grants, Category III Sites**

<b>Target Site</b>	<b>Bakersfield, California</b>	<b>Clifton, New Jersey</b>	<b>Knoxville, Tennessee</b>	<b>Minneapolis, Minnesota</b>	<b>Pensacola, Florida</b>	<b>Rockford, Illinois</b>
<b>Project Name</b>	Youth Goals	Job Ready	Project NOVA	Fresh Start	Building Success	YouthBuild
<b>Lead Partner(s)</b>	Employers Training Resource (ETR)	1. Workforce Development Center 2. Passaic Vicinage Probation Division	Private Industry Council and its administrative unit, Knoxville/Knox County Community Action Committee	Minneapolis Metropolitan Employment and Training Program (METP)	1. Escarosa Regional Workforce Development Board (RWDB) 2. Office of Juvenile Studies, University of West Florida (OJS)	1. YouthBuild Rockford 2. Rock River Training Corporation
<b>Managing Agency</b>	ETR	Passaic Vicinage Probation Div.	Truancy Center	Employment Action Center	OJS	YouthBuild Rockford
<b>Collaborating and Supporting Partners</b>	Bakersfield Police Department, Kern County Sheriff's Dept., Probation Office, Department of Human Services, Kern County High School District	Various Paterson agencies; Also, Prosecutors Office, Mayor's Task Force, Board of Education	Knoxville Community Development Corporation, Knoxville Police Department, Knox County School District, Knox County Juvenile Court, Metropolitan Drug Commission, Office of the District Attorney General	Representatives from local and regional criminal justice agencies, community-based organizations and private/ public sector employers, school organizations	Members of Escarosa Regional Workforce Development Board	None
<b>Involvement of Youths, Parents</b>	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes

**Table 15: Status of Clients, Category III Sites**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Bakersfield, California (10/6/00)</b>	<b>Clifton, New Jersey (9/27/00)</b>	<b>Knoxville, Tennessee (10/3/00)</b>	<b>Minneapolis, Minnesota (10/11/00)</b>	<b>Pensacola, Florida (9/26/00)</b>	<b>Rockford, Illinois (9/20/00)</b>
<b>Enrollment Goal</b>	None set	300	100	None set	45	70
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	108	196	134	83	32	45
<b>Dispositions</b>						
Unsubsidized employment	19	25	31	27	2	19
Joined the military	0	0	2	0	0	0
Dropped for non-participation	NR	NR	16	11	11	NR
Returned/remained in school	4	14		3	4	0
Entered college	3	0	2	3	0	2
Completed education	NR	8	NR	2	NR	NR
Incarceration	9	6	11	4	5	NR
Joined Job Corps	NR	NR	11	NR	NR	NR
Moved	NR	NR	5	NR	NR	NR
<b>Enrollment in Pre-employment and Educational Training</b>	5	121	33	46	6	2
<b>Enrollment in GED/Other Academic Education</b>	4	5	80	NR	4	NR
<b>Referred for other services</b>	97	21	11	11	4	21
<b>In process of being assessed</b>	NR	NR	25	NR	NR	NR
<b>Receiving follow-up services</b>	59	181	106	NR	NR	23

NR: Not Reported

Table 16: Demographics of YODP Participants, Category III Sites

Demographic Information	Bakersfield, California (10/6/00)	Clifton, New Jersey (9/27/00)	Knoxville, Tennessee (10/3/00)	Minneapolis, Minnesota (10/11/00)	Pensacola, Florida (9/26/00)	Rockford, Illinois (9/20/00)
<b>Number enrolled</b>	108	196**	134	83	32	45##
<b>Gender</b>						
Males	57% (23)	80% (97)	70.5% (93)	74% (61)	94% (30)	NR
Females	43% (46)	20% (24)	29.5% (39)	26% (21)	6% (2)	NR
<b>Race</b>						
White	19% (20)	NR	56% (74)	12% (10)	NR	9% (2)
Black	21% (23)	71% (107)	40.1% (53)	71% (58)	NR	74% (17)
Hispanic	54% (58)	24% (29)	.8% (1)	0%	NR	17% (4)
Native American	NR	NR	.8% (1)	1% (5)	NR	NR
Asian	NR	NR		1% (7)	NR	NR
Biracial/ Other	NR	2.5% (3)	2.3% (3)	.02% (2)	NR	NR
<b>Ages</b>						
13 to 17 years old	100% (108)*		76% (100)	61% (50)	13% (4)	
18 to 25 years old		55% (67)#	27.2% (30)	39% (32)	87% (28)	100% (23)###
<b>H.S. Dropouts</b>	NR	NR	51% (72)	55% (45)	NR	
<b>Offenders</b>	NR	NR	70% (99)	<b>72% (59)</b>	<b>NR</b>	
<b>Gang Affiliated</b>	15% (16)	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR

NR: Not Reported

\* Clients were between 14 and 19 years old

\*\* Analysis based on completion of Job Readiness classes by 121 clients

# All clients were between 17 and 19 years old

## Analysis is based on 23 trainees who graduated during the first cycle of the project

### All clients were between 17 and 25 years old



**Table 17: On-site Technical Assistance Provided to Category III Sites**

<b>Bakersfield, California</b>	<b>Clifton, New Jersey</b>	<b>Knoxville, Tennessee</b>	<b>Minneapolis, Minnesota</b>	<b>Pensacola, Florida</b>	<b>Rockford, Illinois</b>
8/13/99 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/24/99 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/19/99 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/19/99 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/23/99 Needs Assessment by TA team	8/23/99 Needs Assessment by TA team
8/17/00 TA workshop  Topics: Team building; maintaining partnerships; engaging community; engaging hard to serve youth; engaging parents	10/13/00 TA workshop  Topics: Building community partnerships; job development; engaging employers; relationship management	9/25-26/00 Bi-level case management workshop  Topics: Bi-level case management approach; perspectives for front-line service providers; assessment planning and client capacity building; delivering a dynamic case management program	Planned workshop (2/1-2/01)  Topics: Engaging employers; developing business enterprises	8/24/00 Effective case management with at-risk youth workshop  Topics: Writing and implementing case plans; creating a viable case plan structure; appropriate and timely review of case plans	3/21/00 Bi-level Case Management workshop  Topics: Bi-level case management approach; perspectives for front-line service providers; assessment planning and client capacity building; delivering a dynamic case management program
					8/24/00 Effective case management of at-risk youth workshop  Topics: Writing and implementing case plans; creating a viable case plan structure; appropriate and timely review of case plans



