

8. Generic Independent Living

Workforce Investment Act Youth Formula Grants

One-Stop Career Centers

Job Corps

American Conservation and Youth Service Corps

National Guard ChalleNGe Program

YouthBuild

Workforce Investment Act Youth Formula Grants

Statutory Authority	Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, Title I, Part B, P.L. 105-220, 29 U.S.C. § 2851 and 20 U.S.C. § 9201
Federal Agency	Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor
Program Type	State formula grant
Eligibility, General	States must submit a plan that outlines a five-year strategy for the workforce investment system.
Eligibility, Age	Youth must be between 14 and 21 to access the funded services.
Eligibility, Financial	Youth must live in a low-income household. Income must either not exceed the poverty line or be 70 percent of the lower living-standard income. ¹
Eligibility, Other	Youth must meet one or more of the following criteria: 1) lack basic literacy skills; 2) be a school dropout; 3) be a homeless, runaway or foster youth; 4) be pregnant or a parent; 5) be an offender; or 6) require assistance to complete their education or secure and hold employment. Thirty percent of funding must be used to serve out-of-school youth.
Youth in Transition	Targeted. These grants are designed to help states and local communities assist low-income youth in acquiring the educational and occupational skills needed for academic and employment success.
Activities	Title I of the Act authorizes the Workforce Investment System and establishes state Workforce Investment Boards that have state oversight of local Workforce Investment Boards. It also mandates local Youth Councils, whose role is to ensure provision and coordination of workforce-investment activities for low-income youth in the local area. The law provides a process by which eligible providers of training and other youth activities are identified.
Services Covered	Youth have access to locally provided services and employment and training activities in partnership with the WIA One-Stop Career Center system, which is under the direction of local Workforce Investment Boards. These activities and services will provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ needed assistance to achieve academic and employment success; ◆ ongoing mentoring; ◆ opportunities for training; ◆ continued supportive services; ◆ incentives for recognition and achievement; and ◆ leadership development, citizenship and community service opportunities.
Funding	FY 2007, \$940.5 million; FY 2008, \$924.0 million

¹ For more information about federal poverty measures, see <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/05poverty.shtml>

Federal funding for youth employment, and for employment programs overall, has been cut back drastically over the past two decades. For fiscal year 2003, this program was funded with \$1.1 billion dollars.

Evaluation

The WIA Youth Formula Grant program recently received a rating of “Adequate” in 2008 using the OMB’s PART assessment. Outcome measures, such as post-program placement of participants into post-secondary education settings, advanced training programs, or the military, have met or exceeded goals consistently. While the program was seen overall as quite beneficial, the PART assessment did take issue with some aspects of the program’s funding and administration.

According to the Department of Labor, in the WIA formula-funded program served 396,470 youth.

Relevance for Youth with Serious Mental Health Conditions

The activities funded under Workforce Investment Act Youth Formula Grants include training and supportive services that are very appropriate for youth with serious mental health conditions. However, the program continually receives less funding as the years pass. Programs funded in the past under the grant have been shown to be successful. As a result, the program’s full potential to help a large number of at-risk youth may be undermined by its diminishing funding levels.

One-Stop Career Centers

Statutory Authority	Work Force Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 P.L. 105-220, 29 U.S.C. § 2841. (The WIA consolidated several separate federal employment programs and replaced the Job Training and Partnership Act.)
Federal Agency	Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
Program Type	Grants to states
Eligibility, General	All individuals seeking assistance from a One-Stop Career Center are eligible for core job-related services; additional services are available to those who need more assistance.
Eligibility, Age	Any individual over the age of 18 is eligible at any time in his or her career.
Youth in Transition	This program is not specifically target to youth or to people with disabilities. However, it offers a range of services that would be needed by youth in transition. Services are always available, and youth may return for career and job search assistance at any time without waiting for eligibility
Services	<p>Individuals with and without disabilities may access the One-Stop Career Centers and obtain several types of services within one facility. The one-stop model is intended to foster collaboration between disability service agencies and generic employment agencies by co-locating them in the same facility. This collaboration can help individuals simultaneously manage their disability and integrate an effective employment strategy. For youth in transition, this may provide a more coordinated delivery of services and employment training.</p> <p>States have a significant amount of latitude in services provided and the operations of One-Stop Centers, therefore the facilities vary greatly across states. All centers must provide core services, which are informational and intended to motivate individuals to find employment. Core services include an intake and assessment of the individual's skills and background and provision of information, including market information, information on the area's economy and employers. Internet access to career development information is also provided as well as resume development and other services.</p> <p>If an individual does not gain employment through the core services, he or she then becomes eligible for more intensive services, which are more personalized. These services often include additional intensive testing of skills and the development of an individualized employment plan. If these intensive services also do not lead to employment, then the individual can seek training. The training will be directly linked to the jobs and occupations that are in demand within the One-Stop Career Center's area. Individuals requiring training will be issued an Individual Training Account, which allows them to choose an approved trainer. They then pay for the training out of their own account. However, this option is available only on a limited basis.</p> <p>Each state must appoint a WIA Board, which must include the governor and local leaders and members of the business community. These boards are charged with choosing One-Stop Career Center service providers and conducting a thorough screening and evaluation of the providers.</p>

The Department of Labor also has several initiatives designed in part to help the one-stop model serve employers. One of these is the President's High-Growth Job Training Initiative, of which 138 grants totaling approximately \$250 million had been made as of August 2006.

Funding

FY 2007, \$63.855 million; FY 2008, \$52.059 million

Evaluation

The WIA identifies performance standards that One-Stop Career Center operators and service providers must meet in order to receive funding. These indicators include job-placement rates, earnings, retention in employment, skills attained and credentials earned. Indicators must be reported to the federal government and are used to determine grant reauthorization and funding amounts.

A 2002 report by the Government Accountability Office on WIA Youth Services questioned whether the One-Stop Career Centers have been successful for youth, concluding that youth were more likely to receive WIA services directly through contracted service providers rather than through One-Stop Career Centers and "that getting youth to visit the typically adult-focused One-Stop Centers was often a demanding task." However, the program has been seen as successful for other populations in more recent GAO evaluations, with primary concerns being the lack of one-stop use by small employers and lack of overall awareness of the program.

Relevance for Youth with Serious Mental Health Conditions

The WIA and One-Stop Career Centers could provide resources for transition-age youth with serious mental health conditions as they transition to adult employment, if the youth are willing to visit the typically adult-focused centers.

The program integrates the services for transition-age youth with those for adults with or without disabilities. As such, it extends mainstream opportunities to youth with serious mental health conditions. Training, career development and job placement services available through WIA and One-Stop Career Centers can aid youth in preparing for and securing employment. The open-ended nature of the program, which allows youth to return for services as and when needed and as often as needed, could be particularly helpful for youth with serious mental health conditions who may not be able to succeed in employment initially. However, the GAO found that youth gravitated to contracted youth service providers, rather than seeking services at the One-Stop Shop Career Centers.

Job Corps

Statutory Authority	Title I-C of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, P. L. 105-220, 29 U.S.C. § 2881 et seq.
Federal Agency	Office of Job Corps, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor
Program Type	Discretionary, providing funds for contracts with private companies to operate Job Corps Centers. Contracts for Job Corps Centers can be either with the Department of Labor or with other federal agencies, through interagency agreements.
Eligibility, General	An individual must have a low income and one or more of the following characteristics: 1) basic skills deficiency; 2) school dropout; 3) homeless, runaway or foster youth; 4) parent; or 5) in need of education, vocational training or intensive counseling and related assistance in order to participate successfully in regular schoolwork or to secure and retain meaningful employment.
Eligibility, Age	Generally, the law requires youth to be not younger than 16 and not older than 21 on the date of enrollment. However, the maximum age may be waived by the Secretary in the case of an individual with a disability, although not more than 20 percent of individuals enrolled nationwide may be 22 to 24 years old. Those over 24 are not eligible to enroll.
Youth in Transition	Targeted
Services Covered	<p>Education, training and support services are provided to students at Job Corps Centers located throughout the country. The program offers residential and nonresidential services. About 88 percent of the students live at Job Corps Centers while enrolled. In addition to education and training, the program offers a comprehensive array of career development services to at-risk individuals including wraparound services, such as counseling and health care. Education follows a standardized curriculum, and vocational courses are offered for at least 11 trades.</p> <p>The program uses a career-development training approach that integrates the teaching of academic, vocational, employability and social competencies through a combination of classroom, practical and job-based learning experiences to prepare youth for stable, long-term, high-paying jobs. Component services include: diagnostic testing, comprehensive basic education (including reading, math, GED preparation, health education, parenting education, computer-skills training and driver education), competency-based vocational education, occupational exploration, social-skills and work-readiness training, counseling, support services, leadership development, health care, recreation, post-program support and follow-up. In addition, participants may receive meals, lodging, clothing, personal allowances and child-care support.</p>
Funding	FY 2007 budget estimate, \$1.606 billion; FY 2008 budget estimate, \$1.518 billion
Evaluation	<p>The program serves roughly 70,000 individuals per year.</p> <p>In a study contracted by the Department of Labor, Mathematica Policy Research reported on Job Corps programs in 2002, concluding that program participants, when compared to a control group, had increased earnings, higher educational levels, and</p>

lower rates of involvement with criminal justice and public assistance programs.

Specifically:

- ◆ 42% obtained a GED compared to only 27% in the control group. In addition, their literacy and numeracy improved considerably.
- ◆ Earnings improved. Gains appeared to have held through year four and earnings gains were evident among groups that have been hardest to reach, i.e., young women with children, younger teens, youth with arrest records and older youth without a high school diploma.

When compared to the control group over the study's follow-up period, Job Corps participants were less reliant on cash welfare and food stamps and had lower arrest rates.

A benefits-cost analysis showed that for every \$1 spent, \$2 were saved in costs to society.

Relevance for Youth with Serious Mental Health Conditions

This program is targeted to transition-age youth through the age of 24 and provides a series of services and supports that enable youth to complete their education and find and keep a job. The inclusion of social-competencies training is particularly relevant for youth with serious mental health conditions. The inclusion of both classroom and practical experiences and the emphasis on stable, long-term, well-paid jobs is potentially very helpful to this group of youngsters, many of whom could, with the right training, attain suitable employment leading to independent living and satisfying careers.

Moreover, the program is not specifically targeted to youth with disabilities. Rather it is an integrated program that allows youth with serious mental health conditions to associate with many other youth and be treated similarly to youth without disabilities.

American Conservation and Youth Service Corps

Statutory Authority	Subtitle C, National and Community Service Act of 1990, P L 101-610, 42 U.S.C. § 12655 et seq.
Federal Agency	Departments of Agriculture and Interior
Program Type	Discretionary grant
Eligibility, General	<p>To be eligible for assistance as a local Youth Corps program, natural resources programs must focus on improvement of wildlife habitat and recreational areas, fish culture, fishery assistance, erosion, wetlands protection, pollution control or similar projects.</p> <p>At the time of enrollment in a local Youth Corps program, individuals must be U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. The law requires that educationally or economically disadvantaged youth be given opportunities to enroll.</p>
Eligibility, Age	Corps programs are open to youth between 16 and 25 or, in the case of summer programs, 15 and 21.
Youth in Transition	Targeted
Services Covered	<p>Funds are used for the creation or expansion of Youth Corps programs. The Corps offers an opportunity for young adults to engage in approved human and natural resources projects that benefit the public or are carried out on federal or Indian lands. Conservation projects may also be carried out on state, local or private lands as part of disaster prevention or relief efforts in response to an emergency or major disaster declared by the President. Supervised by adult leaders, Corps members work on a wide range of conservation, urban infrastructure improvement and human services projects. Full-time, part-time, year-round or summer Youth Corps programs can be funded.</p> <p>The program is designed to combat illiteracy and poverty, provide job skills, enhance educational skills and fulfill environmental needs. Funding is provided for stipends (not more than 100 percent of the poverty level will be paid to participants), health insurance, classroom training (basic skills, GED, high school diploma), general and technical job-skills training, supportive services and educational awards for higher education or vocational training.</p>
Funding	FY 2007, \$330 million; FY 2008 funding is estimated to be about the same
Evaluation	<p>An evaluation conducted in 1997 by Abt Associates and Brandeis University found that the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is cost effective, generating greater monetary benefits to society over and above all costs (\$1.60 of immediate benefits for every \$1.00 of costs); and ◆ provides positive outcomes for participants including significant employment and earnings gains, increased post-secondary education attendance, and reduced arrest and out-of-wedlock pregnancy rates. <p>A similar yet expanded study is underway currently, and more than 23,000 youth participate annually in Corps programs in 41 states and the District of Columbia. The</p>

Corps serves youth with significant disadvantages. In 2005, forty-six percent of corps members came from families that received TANF; 39 percent had family incomes of less than \$15,000 a year; 56 percent lacked a high school diploma; 20 percent had previous court involvement and 6 percent were previously in foster care.

**Relevance for Youth
with Serious Mental
Health Conditions**

The Corps offers young adults the opportunity to gain work experience and improve their academic qualifications while earning. It could be a very good experience for transition-age youth with serious mental health conditions, either as a summer job experience or on a more permanent basis. It is one of the few federal youth programs to set the upper age limit as high as 25 years of age and the program offers health insurance (although not necessarily with significant mental health coverage). Moreover, the public-good theme of the program might appeal to many individuals in this age group. However, the program is small and not available in all states.

National Guard ChalleNGe Program

Statutory Authority	1993 National Defense Authorization Act, 32 U.S.C. § 509
Federal Agency	National Guard Bureau, Department of Defense
Program Type	Matching grants to states
Eligibility, General	<p>Funds are distributed to states, which must provide 40 percent matching funds. Eligible youth must apply and must be nominated by a member of the local community and selected by a state appointed committee. To be eligible, youth must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a volunteer; ◆ 16-18 years old; ◆ a high school dropout of at least one month prior to application; ◆ a citizen or legal resident and resident of the state where the program is operated; ◆ unemployed; ◆ drug-free; ◆ not on parole or probation, not indicted or charged, and free of felony convictions; and ◆ physically and mentally capable of completing the program with reasonable accommodation for physical or other disabilities.
Youth in Transition	Targeted
Services Covered	<p>Through military-based training, this program is designed to improve life skills and employment potential of youth who stop attending secondary school before graduating. Core components of the program are citizenship, academic excellence (GED/ high school attainment), life-coping skills, service to community, health and hygiene-skills training, leadership development and physical training.</p> <p>A five-month residential phase is followed by a year-long mentoring relationship with specially trained mentors from each youth's community. The mentor assists participants to enter the workforce or continue schooling.</p> <p>In addition, an enrollee may receive the following benefits in connection with this training program: lodging, meals, transportation, equipment, clothing, recreation, a stipend for successful completion of training and funds for other personal expenses.</p>
Funding	FY 2007, 85.3 million; FY 2008, \$83.1 million
Evaluation	According to the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program 2006 Performance and Accountability Highlights, the program has graduated more than 70,000 cadets from 31 programs in the past 14 years. More than 42,000 of these graduates—former high school dropouts—have earned their GED or high school diploma while in the program.
Relevance for Youth with Serious Mental Health Conditions	This program provides life-skills training through a residential program and year-long mentoring. For youth who have dropped out of school and meet the other qualifications for the program, this support and mentoring might be of significant value.

YouthBuild

Statutory Authority	The Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as amended by the YouthBuild Transfer Act, P.L. 109-281, 29 U.S.C. §2918a.
Federal Agency	Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor
Program Type	Discretionary grants to public or private nonprofit agencies, including state or local housing agencies or authorities, states or units of local government. YouthBuild programs are funded through a combination of public and private monies.
Eligibility, General	Individuals selected for full-time participation in a YouthBuild program may be offered full-time participation for a period of not less than six months and not more than two years.
Eligibility, Age	Participants must be 16 to 24 years of age.
Eligibility, Other	Participants must be school dropouts. In addition, they must also either be a member of a low-income family, in (or aging out of) foster care, a youth offender, have a disability, be a migrant youth, or a child of incarcerated parents. Exceptions (for up to 25 percent of a program's participants) to these requirements can be made if individuals are found to be deficient of basic skills or have been referred to the YouthBuild program by a local secondary school.
Youth in Transition	Targeted
Services Covered	<p>The program is designed to help disadvantaged youth obtain the skills, education and training that will help them achieve economic self-sufficiency in occupations in demand. Specific services funded include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ secondary education services designed to lead to the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent, including tutoring, study skills training, remedial education, and dropout prevention activities, as well as alternative secondary school services such as comprehensive guidance, bilingual education for individuals with limited English proficiency, and drug and alcohol abuse counseling services; ◆ counseling and assistance in obtaining post-secondary education and financial aid; ◆ occupational training, leadership, and community service activities; and ◆ paid and unpaid internship, job shadowing, and preapprentice and registered apprentice opportunities ◆ A special emphasis is put on leadership and skills training within the construction industry. Participants help to rehabilitate or build new community and public use facilities, and provide new or better housing options for homeless individuals and low-income families. Support services and need-based stipends are provided to enable individuals to participate successfully in the program and retain employment, and all programs must be structured so that 50 percent of participants' time is devoted to educational services and activities. Selected YouthBuild sites also function as re-entry programs for youth offenders ◆ On October 22, 2008, it was announced that 16 YouthBuild sites would begin testing a pilot mentoring program, the "friendly match" mentoring program, based on one currently offered through the National Guard ChalleNge program.
Funding	Department of Labor funding: FY 2007, \$49.5 million; FY 2008, \$59.0 million.

The YouthBuild program also receives funds from a variety of sources other than the department of Labor. Since 1993, the AmeriCorps program has provided funding to many local YouthBuild sites, and has also provided educational vouchers to program participants. The Department of Agriculture also currently provides supplemental funding for some rural YouthBuild sites, and much of the funding for the program comes from private donors, including individuals, non-profit organizations, and corporations.

Evaluation

In 2005, there were more than 200 YouthBuild programs nationwide, and over 14,000 participated in the program between 2002 and 2006. A 2004 Brandeis University study evidenced many positive outcomes for program graduates, including a decrease in overall drug use, arrest, and homelessness, and an increase in community engagement. Youth overall have recalled their participation in the program as a positive experience.

Relevance for Youth with Serious Mental Health Conditions

These programs could provide significant training and experience to transition-age youth with serious mental health conditions if they are interested in entering the building trades. However, as only 200 programs were available nationwide in 2005, few youth could find programs in their local area. The program is growing but it will take time and additional resources to meet the demand From interested and eligible youth.

9. Housing

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers

Public Housing

Community Development Block Grant

HOME Investment Partnership

Shelter-Plus-Care

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

**Projects to Assist in Transition from Homelessness
(PATH)**

National Housing Trust Fund