



Evaluation of Urban Youth Employment Demonstrations Grants

SUMMARY

In 2015, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Employment and Training Administration](#) (ETA) and funded contractor 2M Research Services to conduct the *Urban Employment for Youth and Young Adults Demonstration Grants Implementation Evaluation*. The implementation study aims to document how the seven Urban Youth Employment Demonstration grantee communities implemented their programs, describe perceived challenges and successes, and identify emerging lessons. Researchers collected qualitative data through site visits (in 2016 and early 2017) and analyzed quantitative program data on enrollment and job placement.

In 2015, the Department of Labor awarded two-year grants to seven cities—Baltimore, MD; Camden, NJ; Detroit, MI; Houston, TX; Long Beach, CA; North Charleston, SC; and St. Louis, MO—to support projects addressing the workforce needs of disconnected youth and young adults, ages 16–29, in communities experiencing high rates of unemployment, crime, and poverty, and low high school graduation rates. Communities identified their own goals, strategies, and program models. No sites implemented the same program model, though many offered similar types of services.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Six of the seven sites developed new program models to provide workforce development services to disconnected youth.** These programs differed significantly from standard WIOA models. The six sites rearranged the order of services to their participants or introduced new models, such as allowing participants to “shop” for only those services they want and offering individualized psycho-social services.
- **All project sites experienced challenges with recruitment and engagement due to barriers faced by the disconnected youth or lack of trust, and staff noted that a combination of strategies was more effective in meeting their goals.** For example, projects hired youth connectors with local community knowledge to recruit participants and established neighborhood-based, youth-focused community service centers for both recruitment and program activities.
- **Project sites leveraged new and existing community partnerships to provide education, training, and employment.** Most core partnerships came from preexisting relationships. Six of the seven sites developed new partnerships to provide additional support or wraparound services, such as occupational training and mentoring, respectively.



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- **Establishing relationships with employers was one of the most challenging areas of implementation.** Site visit data indicated that it could take between six months and one year of engagement with an employer before a job was offered. Sites with successful employer relationships often used more than one strategy to develop those relationships, such as holding industry career fairs and developing hiring agreements with employers.

[SEE FULL STUDY](#)

TIMEFRAME: 2015-2017

PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

SUBMITTED BY: 2M Research Services

SPONSOR: Chief Evaluation Office

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