

<b>TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE</b>	<b>NO.</b> 47-08
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**TO:** ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS  
ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES

**FROM:** THOMAS M. DOWD /s/  
Administrator  
Office of Policy Development and Research

**SUBJECT:** Release and Availability of *Evaluation of the YouthBuild Youth Offender Grants*

1. Purpose. To announce the release and availability of the report titled *Evaluation of the YouthBuild Youth Offender Grants*.

2. Background. This report summarizes findings from an implementation and outcomes evaluation of the YouthBuild Youth Offender grants. The grants were awarded to 34 YouthBuild sites, chosen by YouthBuild USA, to provide services for adjudicated youth with the goal of enhancing their educational and employment opportunities and reducing their recidivism rates. The evaluation consisted of two rounds of site visits in 2007 to each of the 34 grantees to examine their program design and implementation, the characteristics of the participants they served, and the outcomes they obtained. These visits included interviews with program administrators, staff, academic and vocational instructors, partners, and employers. Further, approximately 75 percent of all active participants were interviewed to provide the youth perspective on the operation and value of the programs. Additionally, data collected by grantees in a standardized management information system was used to summarize the characteristics of youth offender participants and analyze the factors associated with their outcomes.

3. Report Findings. Following are some of the report's highlights:

- The majority of programs have developed highly selective screening procedures to ensure that they identify the most committed and dedicated youth, including drug screening, basic skills testing, and staff interviews and observations. Youth are also required to attend a Mental Toughness Orientation to test their ability to thrive in a YouthBuild environment.
- The most important characteristics of successful classroom teachers were unrelated to their professional experience and instead included qualities such as personal similarities with participants, taking time to personally engage students, and stepping out of their role to help youth address personal issues.
- Generally, grantees that provided participants with opportunities to earn certifications in the construction industry appeared to provide more consistent and high-quality training.

- The emotional and practical support provided by case managers was cited as one of the primary factors affecting retention. The effectiveness of follow-up services, however, was challenged by a highly transient youth population.
- The majority of participants were male, age 18 and older, and either Black/African American or Hispanic/Latino. More than one-third of the youth were in an intensive aftercare program at the time of enrollment; 56 percent had been in a juvenile detention center and 39 percent in an adult correctional facility at some point prior to enrollment.
- Participants had a number of common challenges that combined to impede their success, including high transiency, substance abuse issues, gang affiliations, being parents themselves, and having an offense history that limited opportunities.
- Nevertheless, over 68 percent of participants completed the program. More than one-third of participants received their GED or high school diploma, nearly two-thirds were placed in unsubsidized employment, education, or occupational training, and nearly three-fourths did not re-offend after entering YouthBuild.
- The results of multivariate analysis showed the following correlations: 1) grantees with higher rates of employment among participants also had lower student-to-classroom teacher ratios, owned and/or managed their own worksites, linked vocational and education instruction, and had active youth policy councils; and 2) grantees with higher rates of GED or high school diploma completion also had lower student-to-classroom teacher ratios and were more often charter schools.

4. Availability. To download the complete report, visit the Employment and Training Administration's publications Web site at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm>.