



Workforce Investment Act Youth Program

January 2009
Doc. #09-007-A

Workforce Investment Act programs provided through Washington's WorkSource system

WIA Youth programs serve 14- to 21-year-olds

4,905 youths participated in FY 07-09

\$20.2M in federal funding for FY 08-09

Programs and services are tailored to local needs

Children from low-income families face significantly more barriers to employment and education than their wealthier counterparts. Low-income kids are more likely to drop out of school and not continue their education later in life, making it harder for them to secure jobs that pay self-sufficient wages.

In 1998, Congress adopted the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to provide workforce preparation and employment services for dislocated workers and low-income youths and adults. It created an integrated service-delivery system that offers a comprehensive array of services through one-stop centers, affiliate sites and the Internet. Here in Washington, WIA services are provided through WorkSource, a partnership of state agencies, 12 local workforce development councils, community and technical colleges, and non-profit service providers.

The Workforce Investment Act's Youth Program serves low-income young people aged 14 to 21 who have significant employment and/or educational barriers. They may receive counseling, tutoring, job-training, mentoring and/or work experience. Other service options include summer employment, study-skills training or instruction toward obtaining a general equivalency degree (GED) or equivalent. Qualified youths may obtain information and services through WorkSource, the state's one-stop career-services system and online at www.go2worksource.com.

Funding and participation

From July 2007 through June 2008, 4,905 people in Washington participated in WIA Youth programs. Some 78.5 percent of them increased their education level or got a job after receiving services.

The U.S. Department of Labor government has allocated \$20.2 million to Washington for WIA Youth programs in the July 2008-June 2009 fiscal year, a drop of more than 27 percent from fiscal-year 2002-03 funding levels.

Goals for WIA Youth Program

- Increase employment and educational opportunities for teens and young adults, especially those with significant barriers (i.e., homeless, in foster care, low-income).
- Increase high school graduation rates.
- Continue high-quality education and training to serve those in need

There are 12 workforce development councils across the state that receive WIA Youth funding. In collaboration with their youth councils and service partners, each local council determines how it will provide youth services. WIA Youth funding has made it possible for local areas to forge strong partnerships with school districts, industry and youth-focused non-profit organizations. These partnerships devise

strategies appropriate for the needs in their communities and focus on helping young people achieve educational success and prepare for employment.

Several areas in Washington have innovatively combined resources to train young adults so they will simultaneously earn college credits along with credentials toward securing high-demand jobs and paid work experiences. A couple of examples of success include:

- The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County will be building upon the success of its award-winning YouthSource Renton program with a \$2 million grant from the federal Department of Labor DOL to assist youth offenders and at-risk youths. The grant will be used to help 200 youths and young adults, age 14 to 24, build their academic and job skills.
- The Olympic Workforce Development Council (Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties) has developed a program called “Pathways to Success” that delivers academic assistance, career planning and work-readiness skill development to eligible youths. So far, 155 young people have participated in the program, with 48 getting jobs and 11 entering postsecondary education.

Helping youth offenders develop job skills

Overcoming obstacles to employment

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