

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 23-11
	DATE January 9, 2012

TO: AFFILIATE ONE-STOPS
COMPREHENSIVE ONE-STOPS
WIA 166 AND 477 GRANTEES
DOL ETA REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS
STATE GOVERNORS
STATE WIA LIAISONS
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
WIB STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
WIB LOCAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

FROM: JANE OATES 
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: New Research Reports on Summer and Post-Summer Youth
Employment Initiatives under the American Recovery and
Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act)

1. Purpose. To announce the release and availability of three new Employment and Training Administration (ETA) research reports related to summer and post-summer youth employment initiatives: (1) *Using TANF Funds to Support Subsidized Youth Employment: The 2010 Summer Youth Employment Initiative*; (2) *Beyond a Summer Work Experience: The Recovery Act 2009 Post-Summer Youth Employment Initiative*; and (3) *Innovative Programs and Promising Practices: Indian and Native American Summer Youth Employment Initiatives and the 2009 Recovery Act*.

2. Background. Under the Recovery Act, local areas and Indian and Native American grantees throughout the country had the opportunity to offer subsidized summer and post-summer employment opportunities to large numbers of youth in 2009 and 2010. These three new studies, in combination with the summer youth employment study completed in 2010, provide a collection of insights into how youths were matched with employers to gain valuable work experience as part of the Summer Youth Employment Initiative (SYEI) and post-SYEI.

3. Publication Descriptions.

- ***Using TANF Funds to Support Subsidized Youth Employment: The 2010 Summer Youth Employment Initiative.*** This study focuses on how states and local areas were able to use Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds, either exclusively or in combination with other funds, to offer employment opportunities to youth during the summer of 2010. Based on 10 local sites across seven states, this study describes the partnerships between state and local TANF and workforce

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
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agencies, particular aspects of the youth employment initiatives that the TANF funding affected, and youths' summer work experiences.

- ***Beyond a Summer Work Experience: The Recovery Act 2009 Post-Summer Youth Employment Initiative.*** This study examines the unique opportunity for states and local areas to build on their 2009 summer youth employment experience to provide older, out-of-school youth additional work experience beyond the summer months. In a total of eight local areas, this study provides insights into the feasibility and value of developing a subsidized employment intervention for older, disconnected youth that moves beyond a strictly “summer” work experience.
- ***Innovative Programs and Promising Practices: Indian and Native American Summer Youth Employment Initiatives and the 2009 Recovery Act.*** This study provides a rich description of the implementation of the summer youth employment initiative in the summers of 2009 and 2010. In five diverse Indian and Native American grantee sites, this study provides a context in which the youth initiatives were created, provides a detailed discussion of how grantees used their Recovery Act funds to implement programs to serve youths in their communities, and identifies key strengths, successes, and challenges experienced by the sites.

4. Key Research Findings. Highlights of key findings include the following:

Using TANF Funds to Support Subsidized Youth Employment: The 2010 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

- The TANF Emergency Fund created an opportunity for workforce and TANF agencies to build new or expand existing partnerships in serving disadvantaged youths. In all study sites, the state TANF and workforce agencies collaborated to submit an application for SYEI using the TANF Emergency Fund. They worked together to determine how to distribute their TANF Emergency Fund allocations to sites and provided guidelines about youth eligibility.
- The 2010 SYEI exposed the workforce system to the TANF population, a population that, in some cases, the workforce system might not have had much experience serving. In addition, TANF youth were introduced to the range of workforce services available to them.
- Local workforce agencies served a greater number of youth than it would have otherwise served as a result of tapping into funds that arose from the partnership between TANF and workforce agencies.
- Nearly all study sites used multiple funding sources, and one site used only the TANF Emergency Fund to support its youth initiative. The five potential sources of funding were: (1) remaining funds from the 2009 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Recovery Act youth allocation; (2) the TANF Emergency Fund; (3) regular WIA Youth formula funds; (4) regular TANF funds; and (5) other funding sources, such as

state or city general funds or private foundations. In New York, TANF block grant funds supported local area provision of subsidized employment opportunities for several years.

- For the TANF Emergency Fund, each state interpreted the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines and provided guidance to its local areas regarding the state's youth eligibility requirements. Based on state guidance, two sites continued to use WIA eligibility rules for the TANF Emergency Fund, and other sites either restricted eligibility for the TANF funds to TANF and TANF-eligible households or to youths in households earning 200 percent or less of the Federal poverty level.
- Several sites indicated that they purposefully sought private work sites for the 2010 SYEI for one of two main reasons: (1) to count employer costs of supervision as state maintenance-of-effort funds and prevent any misunderstanding that the source of supervisors' income was from Federal funds; and (2) to offer broader opportunities for youths and/or increase the likelihood that the summer job would lead to youths' permanent work placement at the jobsite.
- Common work sites included manufacturing facilities, restaurants, retail stores, summer camps, and public administration buildings. Youth participants were placed at work sites to perform an array of tasks, such as administrative, construction, food service, sales, and senior care. On average, participants in the 10 sites worked 300 hours over 10 weeks and earned an average of \$8.15 per hour.

Beyond a Summer Work Experience: The Recovery Act 2009 Post-Summer Youth Employment Initiative

- Stand-alone paid work experience programs can be an effective way to engage disconnected youth. The sites' Post-SYEI experiences, particularly when also considering the SYEI, suggest there is a great deal of interest and willingness among older, out-of-school youth to make an initial connection with the workforce system if the offer on the table is an immediate job and wages.
- The Post-SYEI reinforced the importance of providing older youth with work experiences as part of a larger targeted career ladder in health care or other high-growth or high-demand industries. Building on their Post-SYEI experience, many sites noted plans to continue to develop future career pathway programs, especially in health care.
- Sites took advantage of the Post-SYEI to target and serve older, out-of-school youth. There was particularly strong support across the study sites for the Recovery Act's upward expansion of the regular WIA Youth Program age eligibility boundaries (that is, 14 to 21 years) to include disconnected young adults ages 22 to 24 years.

- The Post-SYEI model can serve as a useful “bridge” between the youth participant and permanent employment or transitions into other workforce preparation activities.
- Youth demand for the SYEI and Post-SYEI frequently exceeded sites’ enrollment capacity. All study sites achieved maximum enrollment levels with available funding.
- Half of the study sites reported leveraging Recovery Act funding with monies from a variety of other sources. Sites utilized WIA Adult formula funds, WIA discretionary grants, Vocational Rehabilitation funds, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds, funds from local school districts, and local government revenues to operate more robust subsidized work experience programs in the summer and post-summer periods than possible by relying solely on Recovery Act funds.
- Most sites used the post-summer period to extend the work experiences of youth who were already participating in a summer subsidized work experience, providing older, out-of-school youth with an extended work experience, which was potentially between 6 to 11 consecutive months compared with six to eight weeks during the summer-only work experience.
- The longer-than-typical “summer job” work experience was viewed as the key benefit of the Post-SYEI by youth participants, employers, and workforce administrative and frontline staff.
- Real-life work experience was the cornerstone of the Post-SYEI. Sites focused on connecting older, out-of-school youth to meaningful work experiences that aligned closely with their interests and goals, rather than on providing them with training or academic enrichment activities.

Innovative Programs and Promising Practices: Indian and Native American Summer Youth Employment Initiatives and the 2009 Recovery Act

- Recovery Act funds enabled sites to serve larger numbers of youth and older youth, up to age 24, than they had previously been able to serve, all of whom have significant need for employment training and work opportunities.
- Four of the study sites noted that they extended their programs to youth up to age 24, a group that they typically found hard to serve because of limited resources for their adult programs. They recognized the high level of need of this group, and regarded it as both a program strength and a real success that they could offer the program and work opportunities to these older youth.
- Sites used Recovery Act funds to innovate by serving new groups of youth, such as those in the juvenile justice system, and offering new worksite opportunities, such as green jobs.

- Staff from all five study sites discussed the significant demand for their summer youth employment programs. Even with the introduction of additional Recovery Act funds, programs continued to experience excess demand for services, with the numbers of youth in need of, and applying for, SYEI programs far exceeding the number of participant slots available.
- A strength and success of the program frequently cited by employers and staff involved how the SYEI benefitted not only the direct participants (youth and employers), but also the larger community as a whole. Employers received additional staff to help them complete work and accomplish goals they might not have been able to achieve without the help of the youth. Youths learned the importance of their own tribes, the Native American community, and the importance of helping other people, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. This helped youths become more community (and community service)-oriented, something that program staff and employers felt would help them become good citizens of the tribe and the larger community.
- By far the most often reported program strength and individual success involved the provision of positive experiences to youth. Most fundamentally, youths had an opportunity to earn an income that enabled them to contribute to the support of their families, pay off debts or restitution, save for the future, and support themselves.
- Most sites lacked the funds and staff available to provide post-summer/post-program follow-up to youths, despite youth interest in and demand for these kinds of post-program services.
- Based on performance data submitted to ETA by the grantees covering the period April 2009 to January 2011, large numbers of youths began enrolling in May 2009, with about 1,000 youths being served in May 2009 and 2,500 youths being served in June 2009. Enrollment rose again during July, peaking at about 3,300.
- A significant majority, both of study sites and all sites nationally, met their performance measures by a significant margin. Available data for program year 2009 suggest that by the end of the program year, 84 percent of the youth participants completed summer employment, and 78 percent of them had attained work readiness. For program year 2010 through January 2011, data showed that 95 percent of the participants completed summer employment and 94 percent of them had improved work readiness.

5. Inquiries. To view an abstract of any one of these publications, as well as to download the full reports, visit the ETA Research Publication Database Web site at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm> and type in key words from the title. It will also be listed under the “15 Most Recent Publications.”