

Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) A Program of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)

PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMARY

This overview of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development's (DYCD's) Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) is based on a program review conducted by Westat/Metis staff for the evaluation of the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) initiatives. The evaluation team collected program review data between February and July 2008 through interviews with key staff from CEO; DYCD; and TATC¹ Consulting (TATC), the technical assistance provider. Additional data collection activities included a review of program documents, monthly data reports through May 2008, the YAIP online data system, and DYCD monitoring and data reports for Cycles 2 and 3 of fiscal year (FY) 2008². Site visits were also conducted at four of the 15 service provider sites to interview provider staff, observe program activities, conduct focus groups with program participants ages 18 to 24, and review program documentation.

- Sponsoring Agency:** New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)
- Provider Agencies:** Arbor E&T, Citizens Advice Bureau, Child Center of NY, Federation Employment and Guidance Service, Good Shepherd Services, Henkels & McCoy, Henry Street Settlement, Italian American Civil Rights League, Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, New York State Association for Retarded Children, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, Supportive Children Advocacy Network, Southern Queens Park Association, Vanguard Urban Improvement Association, and Wildcat
- Start Date:** November 19, 2007
- CEO Budget:** The total funding for this initiative in FY 2008 was \$7,434,240. Funding for FY 2009 is expected to be \$9,471,900.³
- Target Population:** Disconnected young adults (out of school and out of work)
- Statement of Need:** There are approximately 165,000 young people ages 16 to 24 in New York City who are not in school, not working, and not looking for work.⁴ Without targeted opportunities for increased education and skill development, these disconnected young adults are at risk for long-term joblessness and economic hardship. In New York City, African American and Hispanic youth have higher disconnected rates than non-Hispanic White and Asian youth. Areas with particularly high concentrations of disconnected youth and high rates of poverty include several community districts in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx.
- Goal and Services:** The goal of the program is to reduce the risk of long-term economic hardship among disconnected youth in New York City by increasing their educational opportunities, career preparation, labor force participation, wage earnings, job retention, and educational attainment. YAIP is designed to reach young adults who are already equipped with the basic skills needed to enter the labor market and need only a short-term intervention to

¹ TATC Consulting (TATC) is an employee-owned company that provides management consulting services to government agencies and private sector organizations. TATC's expertise includes technical assistance and training to facilitate youth program development.

² When fully operational, YAIP will operate with three 14-week cycles per fiscal year beginning in July of each fiscal year. However, the program had only two cycles in FY 2008.

³ The funding estimate for FY 2009 accounts for three cycles, an increase over the two cycles included in the budget for FY 2008.

⁴ Levitan, M. (2005). *Out of School, Out of Work....Out of Luck? New York City's Disconnected Youth*. New York: Community Service Society.

connect to sustainable employment or educational or training opportunities to advance their career potential. YAIP consists of three phases of services and offers job readiness workshops and activities; individual support, counseling, and assessments; paid internships (at NYC’s minimum wage of \$7.15/hour); case management; and follow-up.

Eligibility Criteria: The YAIP target population includes young adults ages 16 to 24 with at least a 6th-grade reading level who are not enrolled in school and not working. In addition, the program targets youth who live in CEO- and DYCD-designated communities with high rates of poverty and high concentrations of disconnected youth. Each provider is allowed to select one or two community districts from which to target recruitment. The community districts include:

- Brooklyn: 1, 3, 4, 5, 12, 16 (Williamsburg/Greenpoint, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Bushwick, East New York, Brownsville);
- Bronx: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (Mott Haven and Morrisania, Hunts Point/Longwood, Highbridge/Concourse, University Heights/Fordham, East Tremont/ Belmont);
- Manhattan: 3, 10, 11, 12 (Lower East Side/Chinatown, Central Harlem, East Harlem, Washington Heights/Inwood);
- Queens: 1, 3, 4, 7, 12 (Astoria/Long Island City, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst/Corona, Flushing, Jamaica); and
- Staten Island: 1 (St. George).

Targets/Outcomes: YAIP is designed to operate with three 14-week cycles per fiscal year. At full scale, the program will serve approximately 1,350 participants in a year. For FY 2008, the program met its total enrollment target of 906. Both FY 2009 and FY 2010 will have three cycles with an annual enrollment target of 1,359. The targets and actual numbers for the categories per FY 2008 cycle are presented in Table 1, as well as the percentage of each target obtained as of July 2008.

Table 1. YAIP Milestones and Outcomes for FY 2008 Cycles 2 and 3

Category	Cycle 2			Cycle 3			FY 08 Target	% of FY Target Met
	Target	Verified	% of Target Met	Target	Verified	% of Target Met		
Enrolled	453	453	100%	453	453	100%	906	100%
Placement in internship of all who complete orientation	441	435	98.6%	448	448	100%	889	99.3%
Successful completion of internship	347	340	97.9%	347	385	111%	694	104.5%
Verified post-internship placement	317	251	79.2%	317	a	Not available	634	Not available
Retention in 3rd quarter after internship	272	Not yet available	Not yet available	272	Not yet available	Not yet available	544	Not yet available

^a Not yet verified by DYCD

Selected Key Findings

Fidelity to the Program Model. Program review findings indicate that YAIP providers are adhering to the program model. The YAIP model is based on DYCD's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and Out-of-School Youth (OSY) program, which offer employment preparation, educational services, and support services while teaching life and work readiness skills. In addition, both OSY and YAIP target disconnected youth. However, YAIP offers a longer internship period than SYEP, and does not require income verification for eligibility as does the OSY program. All providers started on time and implemented the orientation phase (which ranges from 2 to 4 weeks) and the internship and education phase (10 to 12 weeks), although they have initiated the 9-month follow-up phase with varying degrees of intensity and success.

Characteristics of the Clients Served in Comparison to the Target Population. As part of their contractual agreements, providers are required to enroll at least 80 percent of their participants from the community districts the providers represent. In Cycle 2, only one provider successfully met this goal, and in Cycle 3, a total of eight providers met this goal. Preliminary data for FY 2009 Cycle 1 indicated that 13 of the 15 providers were on track to meet the community district enrollment goal. Additional data should be collected to determine whether participants meet the other eligibility criteria, particularly those related to their "disconnectedness" prior to enrolling in the program.

Service Delivery. Program review findings suggest that between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 of FY 2008, providers improved their delivery of services, including orientation activities, educational workshops, case management, and internship matching and monitoring. Key elements of effective service delivery include informative, interactive, and engaging activities and workshops; an established rapport between and among staff and participants; and compatible matches between participants and internship worksites. The follow-up phase appears to be the most challenging of the program to implement because already hard-to-retain participants become more difficult to engage once structured daily internship and program activities end. Service providers noted that in many cases participants became unresponsive, moved away, changed contact information, or just "disappeared into the streets."

Provider Capacity. The providers are 15 established community-based organizations (CBOs), many of which have had long-term relationships with the communities they serve. Program review findings indicate that provider capacity in FY 2008 has been adequate to serve Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 participants and provide CEO monitoring data. Limited physical facility space and inappropriate staffing were issues during Cycle 2 for a few providers. By the next cycle, these issues appeared to be resolved or in the process of being resolved. Some providers altered or expanded their physical space or made staffing changes, including the replacement of some project directors. Providers have the capacity to collect and report CEO performance monitoring data through the use of DYCD's online data system. To facilitate user proficiency, DYCD staff and the agency's software developer, Corporate Staffing Services (CSS), conducted group and individual training sessions for providers. One issue most relevant to follow-up data appears to be ensuring that all providers enter data consistently, completely, and in a timely manner so that DYCD can effectively monitor follow-up activity.

Agency Management. DYCD takes an active approach to managing the implementation of YAIP, and manages YAIP through a project director supported by a deputy director, three program managers, and a program assistant. The program managers are the direct points of contact between the agency and the 15 providers, and they monitor the providers. DYCD also maintains an online data system for individual-level data. DYCD staff provide training on the data system, monitor data entry, visit the providers, and review case notes and time sheets. DYCD also contracted with TATC to provide technical assistance to the 15 providers for each program phase. In addition, DYCD convenes the 15 service providers on a monthly basis to offer an opportunity to share experiences and best practices. DYCD also sends program updates to providers via weekly email correspondence.

Early Outcomes. The program is meeting its internship attendance goals; overall attendance improved in FY 2008 from 75 percent in Cycle 2 to 85 percent in Cycle 3 due in part to improved staff and participant relations and improved recruitment and selection of participants by providers. The post-internship placement performance for FY 2008 Cycle 2 was slightly below target. However, providers are taking steps to ensure better placement performance in FY 2008 Cycle 3 and FY 2009 Cycle 1, such as a more concerted effort to enroll youth who meet the eligibility criteria and require only a short-term intervention to prepare for employment, educational, or training opportunities. DYCD has also emphasized the importance of having stronger verification rates through properly documenting placements.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As implemented, DYCD's YAIP is in alignment with the CEO mission and is generally meeting key CEO criteria. With each new cycle, DYCD and the providers are gaining new insights into the operation of the program and the need to make appropriate adjustments. Based on program review findings:

- Providers are adhering to the YAIP program model.
- DYCD has an active management approach and is providing strong oversight and technical assistance to YAIP providers.
- There are challenges associated with recruiting the required percentage of eligible participants from the designated community districts, and more research is needed to determine the extent to which participants were truly disconnected prior to enrollment.
- The program needs to strengthen and standardize its approach to retaining and providing services to participants during the follow-up phase.