

Mayor's anti-poverty team aids poor

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A year after Mayor Bloomberg announced a bold new effort to help the city's poor, his anti-poverty team said Thursday that it had launched 31 different programs.

One offers internships to young people, many of them dropouts. About 1,360 New Yorkers, ages 16-24, will earn minimum wage for 25 hours a week during the three-month program.

"It's really hard to find a job. People want experience, even in retail. And we don't have experience," said Joshua Mercado, 21, of Brooklyn, who interns at a graphic design company.

The companies that sign up also mentor the youth for about nine months after the internship ends.

The number of New Yorkers living in poverty hit 1.54million last year - up from 1.49 million when the mayor took office in 2002. He created a \$150 million anti-poverty team, known as the Center for Economic Opportunity, to reverse this trend.

"What we are trying to do is to see if there are new approaches and to really measure what works," said Bloomberg.

Advocates for the poor praised Bloomberg's efforts.