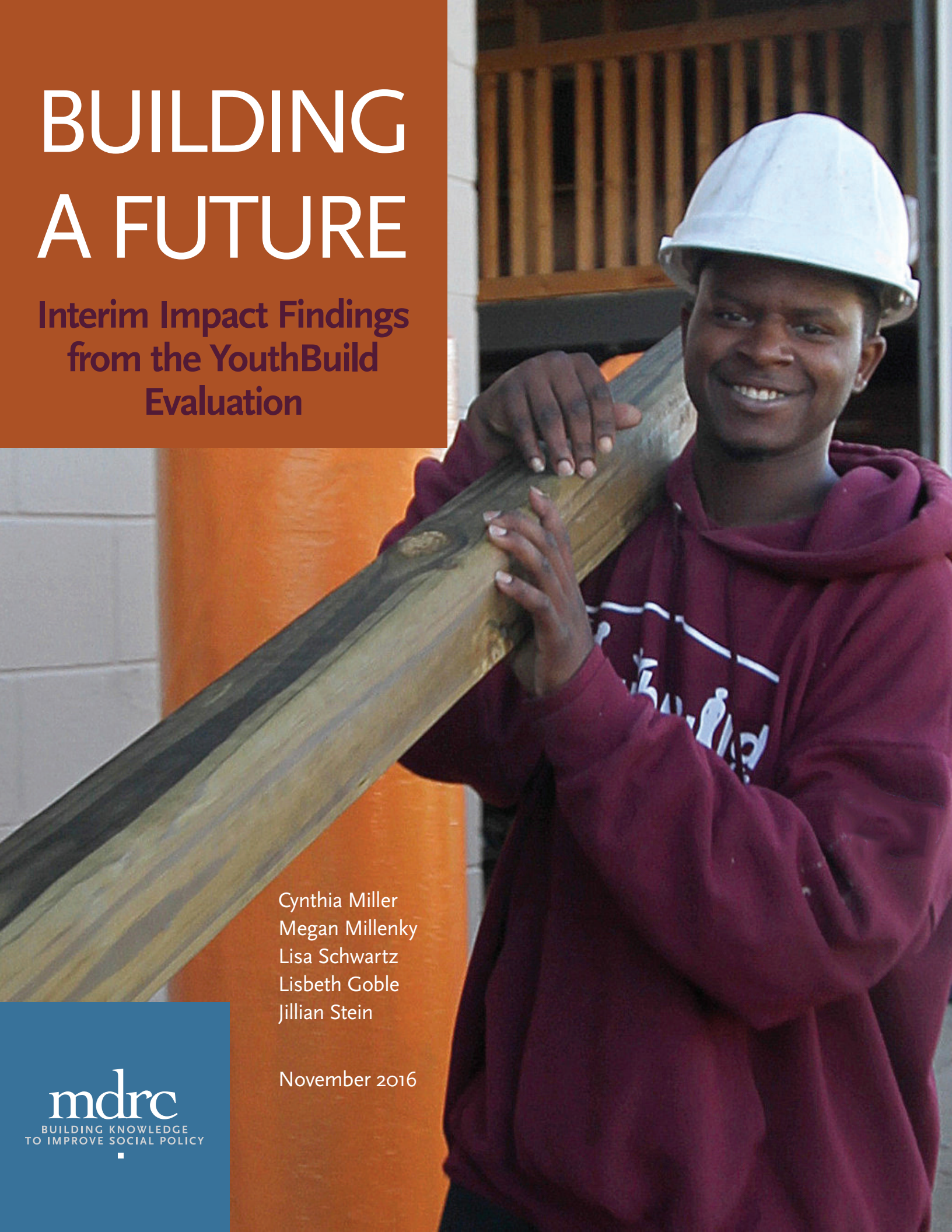


BUILDING A FUTURE

Interim Impact Findings
from the YouthBuild
Evaluation

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Lisbeth Goble
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November 2016



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Overview

Young people have been hit especially hard by changes in the labor market over the past decades. Unemployment among 16- to 24-year-olds increased the most of any age group during the recent recession, and remains more than double that among older adults. The unemployment rate is especially high for young people without high school diplomas. YouthBuild is one program that attempts to help this group, serving over 10,000 of them each year at over 250 organizations nationwide. Each organization provides construction-related or other vocational training, educational services, counseling, and leadership-development opportunities to low-income young people ages 16 to 24 who did not complete high school.

YouthBuild is being evaluated using a randomized controlled trial, in which eligible young people at participating programs were assigned either to a program group, invited to enroll in YouthBuild, or to a control group, referred to other services in the community. The evaluation includes 75 programs across the country funded by the U.S. Department of Labor or the Corporation for National and Community Service and nearly 4,000 young people who enrolled in the study between 2011 and 2013. This report, the second in the evaluation, presents the program's effects on young people through two and a half years.

Main Findings

About 75 percent of the young people assigned to the program group participated in YouthBuild, and about half of these participants reported that they graduated from the program within 12 months. YouthBuild led to a number of positive effects on young people, most consistently in the area of education and training.

- YouthBuild increased participation in education and training, even though a high percentage of the young people in the control group also sought out and participated in education and training.
- Overall, participants rated their experiences in YouthBuild favorably, although some program components were rated more highly than others.
- YouthBuild increased the rate at which participants earned high school equivalency credentials, enrolled in college, and participated in vocational training.
- YouthBuild led to a small increase in wages and earnings at 30 months.
- YouthBuild increased civic engagement, particularly volunteering, but had few effects on other measures of youth development or attitudes.
- YouthBuild had few effects on involvement in the criminal justice system.

The program's interim effects on education and training are encouraging. A later report, measuring effects through four years, will examine whether these interim effects lead to longer-term gains in work and earnings.

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The Authors

Executive Summary

Making the successful transition to adulthood has become more and more difficult for many American young people. Unemployment rates among young people are more than double those among older adults, and young people were hit especially hard by the recent recession of 2007-2009.¹ Finding well-paying work has become particularly challenging for young people without high school diplomas or equivalents. Their unemployment rate peaked at over 35 percent during the recession and remains high today, at over 20 percent in the second quarter of 2016.² Finding ways to reengage these young people in education and work is one of our nation's central social policy challenges.

YouthBuild is one program that attempts to help this group. YouthBuild is a federally and privately funded program operated at over 250 organizations nationwide, serving over 10,000 young people each year. Each organization provides construction-related training and may also provide training in other in-demand industries, along with educational services, counseling, and leadership-development opportunities, to low-income, out-of-school young people ages 16 to 24.

In 2010, the Department of Labor (DOL), with initial support from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), awarded a contract to MDRC and its partners Social Policy Research Associates and Mathematica Policy Research to conduct an impact evaluation of YouthBuild. The evaluation includes 75 programs across the country receiving funding from either DOL or CNCS, and nearly 4,000 young people who enrolled in the study between 2011 and 2013. The evaluation will examine YouthBuild's effects on the young people it serves for up to four years after they enter the study, assessing effects on a wide range of outcomes including education and training, work and earnings, youth development, and involvement in the criminal justice system.

This report presents the interim effects of the program two and a half years after young people applied to YouthBuild, examining participation in the program, effects on education and training, and early effects on work and earnings. The findings show that YouthBuild led to a number of positive effects on this group of young people, including a

¹U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "BLS Data Viewer: (Seas) Unemployment Rate — 16-24 Yrs.," 2016, website: <http://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNS14024887>; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "BLS Data Viewer: (Seas) Unemployment Rate — 25 Yrs. and Over," 2016, website: <http://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNS14000048>.

²U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "BLS Data Viewer: (Unadj) Unemployment Rate — Not Enrolled in School, Less Than a High School Diploma 16-24 Yrs.," 2016, website: <http://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/LNU04023019Q>.

notable increase in the rate at which they earned General Educational Development (GED) credentials and a small, positive effect on college enrollment.³ YouthBuild also led to a small, positive effect on wages and earnings. A later report will examine the program's effects on education and work after four years.

The YouthBuild Model

All YouthBuild programs in operation are modeled to some degree on the original YouthBuild program: the East Harlem Youth Action Program founded in the late 1970s in New York City. That original program was designed to address the complex needs of participants and their community with a culture of respect for young people that is still emphasized today.

The YouthBuild model includes a mix of education, vocational training (usually training in construction), counseling, leadership development, and community service. Eligibility is typically limited to out-of-school young people ages 16 to 24 who have dropped out before completing high school and who meet one of the following criteria: They are from low-income or migrant families, are in foster care or are aging out of it, are ex-offenders, have disabilities, or are children of incarcerated parents.

Programs recruit or rely on word of mouth to identify interested applicants, who then go through assessments before enrolling such as tests of basic skills and one-on-one interviews. Most frequently, programs then implement a rigorous Mental Toughness Orientation, which can last from a single day to several weeks. Mental Toughness Orientation is designed to facilitate group bonding and ready recruits for the program's activities. It also serves as a period when many young people are screened out because they stop attending or otherwise fail to follow established rules.

Most young people who make it through Mental Toughness Orientation enroll in YouthBuild, are offered the program's services, and participate for 6 to 12 months. New participants typically begin the program in a group with other enrollees, and that group alternates weekly or every few weeks between a focus on education and a focus on vocational training. The components of the model are intended to be integrated and designed to be offered together.

³The term "GED" is used throughout this report to indicate a high school equivalency credential, even though many states no longer use the official GED test to grant those credentials. Given the timing of the YouthBuild evaluation, most study participants would still have taken the GED exam to earn their high school equivalency credentials.

YouthBuild's services consist of:

- **Educational services** such as instruction in basic skills, remedial education, and alternative education leading to a high school diploma or GED. A growing number of programs also offer services to prepare young people for post-secondary education.
- **Vocational training**, typically construction training in which participants rehabilitate or build housing for low-income people. Beginning in 2012, certain DOL-funded programs were authorized to provide a “construction plus” model, in which funding could be used to offer training for in-demand occupations outside construction. Before that date, some programs were already providing training for other vocations such as Certified Nursing Assistant, commercial driver, or information technology professional.
- **Youth-development services**, including leadership training and community service. These services are defining features of YouthBuild that are addressed in multiple ways and serve multiple purposes. Leadership training is approached through structured curricula or formal and informal roles for participants within the YouthBuild program on committees, in the classroom, on work sites, or in community activities and meetings. Young people participate in community service by constructing affordable housing and through other activities; this community service attends to the community's needs and gives young people opportunities to practice leadership and other skills.
- **Supportive services and transition services** include counseling, case management, life-skills training, workforce preparation, follow-up services for one year, stipends for participation, and other forms of support, such as help with transportation, child care, or housing. All of these services are designed to help young people address challenges that may prevent them from achieving success in the program or beyond.

The Evaluation

YouthBuild is being evaluated using a random assignment design, in which eligible young people at participating programs around the country were assigned either to a program group, invited to enroll in YouthBuild, or to a control group, provided information on other services in the community. Programs selected for the evaluation include a mix of those receiving funding from DOL and from CNCS in 2011. From the 74 programs that received grants from DOL in 2011, 60 were randomly selected to participate in the study, and 58 were ultimately able to

participate. From the 24 programs that received CNCS grants above a certain amount but not DOL grants in 2011, 17 were selected as suitable to participate in the study.

These 75 programs enrolled a total of 3,929 young people into the study between August 2011 and January 2013. For each enrollment cycle, every program used its typical selection process to create a pool of applicants deemed eligible and appropriate for YouthBuild. These applicants were then assigned at random to fill the available program slots or to a control group.

The evaluation consists of three components. First, a process study examined the operations of the YouthBuild programs in the evaluation and the perceptions and experiences of the participating young people. The findings from the process study, presented in an earlier report, indicate that there was variation in how programs implemented the components of the model, in response to their local contexts. Overall, however, the participating programs implemented the YouthBuild model well and faithfully. Fidelity to the YouthBuild model was most consistent and highest in vocational services and varied more among programs in leadership development and preparation for postsecondary education.

Second, an impact study is tracking the program and the control groups for four years using survey data and administrative records. The impact analysis will examine the program's effects on a wide range of outcomes, including enrollment in education and educational attainment, work and earnings, involvement in the criminal justice system, family structure, and social and emotional development. This report presents interim findings, and longer-term findings will be presented in the final report. Finally, a cost-effectiveness study will estimate the costs of operating and running YouthBuild and compare these costs with any positive gains that are achieved. The results from this analysis will be included in the final report.

The analysis presented in this report is based on several data sources. First, surveys were administered to a random subset of study participants 12 and 30 months after they entered the study. These surveys collected information on education and training, work and earnings, use of services, family formation, involvement in the criminal justice system, youth development, and health and well-being. Second, administrative records were obtained for the full study sample on employment and earnings (from the National Directory of New Hires) and postsecondary enrollment (from the National Student Clearinghouse). Third, a survey of YouthBuild programs provided information on program characteristics. Finally, program data on enrollment reported to the DOL management information system are used to corroborate YouthBuild participation as reported by young people on the surveys.⁴

⁴A management information system is a database that holds information on program operations and that can produce reports on every level of a program's management.

The young people enrolled in the study generally fit the profile of typical YouthBuild participants. The majority of study participants are male (64 percent) and most are either black (63 percent) or Latino (15 percent). On average, study participants were nearly 20 years old when they entered the study, with about 70 percent older than age 18. Over 90 percent did not have high school diplomas or GEDs when they entered the study, and about 60 percent of them had left school after completing the tenth or eleventh grade.

Findings

- **About 75 percent of the young people assigned to the program group participated in YouthBuild, and about half of these participants reported that they graduated from the program within 12 months.**

At 12 months, 74 percent of the program group reported ever receiving YouthBuild services or participating in YouthBuild activities. Those who reported participating said that they remained in YouthBuild for an average of 8 months, and about 50 percent of them reported completing the program, or graduating. About a quarter of the participants (22 percent) reported still being involved in YouthBuild at 12 months, and 28 percent had left the program without completing it.

- **Overall, participants rated their experiences in YouthBuild favorably, although some program components were rated more highly than others.**

Eighty-seven percent of participants rated their overall YouthBuild experiences favorably, meaning “very good” or “good.” They were also asked about each of the program services: The most highly rated services were construction or job training, counseling, and leadership training. Participants gave the YouthBuild staff favorable ratings related to understanding their needs and helping them to learn. They reported being slightly less satisfied with the services they received after leaving the program, such as assistance finding a job.

- **YouthBuild increased participation in education and training, even though a high percentage of young people in the control group sought out and participated in education and training activities.**

The program’s rigorous screening processes are designed to ensure that the only young people who enter the program are those who have a good chance of completing it. As a result, young people in both the program and control groups who made it through the screening process and into the study are probably more motivated and persistent than the typical young person who has not completed high school. By 30 months after enrollment, for example, 70 percent of the control group had participated in education-related services.

Despite this high rate of control group participation, however, young people in the program group were more likely than their control group counterparts to have participated in education and training, especially GED preparation, vocational training, and a variety of youth-development activities. For example, 75 percent of the program group reported participating in an education-related activity during the first 12 months, compared with 57 percent of the control group.

- **YouthBuild increased GED receipt and enrollment in two-year colleges.**

Most young people who entered the program had not completed high school, and a central goal of the program is to help these young people earn GEDs. The program did have a sizable effect on GED receipt. By 30 months, about 18 percent of the young people in the control group reported earning GEDs, compared with 31 percent of the program group, an increase of 14 percentage points (see Table ES.1). This estimated effect includes all young people in the program group, not accounting for the fact that 25 percent of them never participated in YouthBuild. The effect on young people who did participate in YouthBuild is 19 percentage points.

Getting a GED by itself may increase college attendance, but many YouthBuild programs explicitly focus on helping young people make the transition to postsecondary education. By 30 months, 22 percent of the young people in the program group reported enrolling in a two-year community college at some point since they entered the study, compared with 17 percent of the control group, an impact of 5 percentage points. This increase in survey-reported college attendance is corroborated by administrative records from the National Student Clearinghouse.

- **YouthBuild increased participation in vocational training and led to a small increase in the receipt of training certificates.**

Vocational training, primarily in construction, is another central part of the YouthBuild model. YouthBuild seems to have increased participation in vocational training both during the program period and afterward. In the first year, the program group was more likely than the control group to have participated in a job-skills training program. Many members of the program group did so at a YouthBuild location. When survey respondents were asked at 30 months about *formal* enrollment in vocational training at a technical, business, or trade school, YouthBuild still had an impact: 31 percent of the program group reported having enrolled in such training since entering the study, compared with 20 percent of the control group. Very few young people reported obtaining vocational certificates by Month 30: 4 percent of the program group and 2 percent of the control group.

Table ES.1
Impacts on Key Outcomes at 30 Months

Outcome	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)
<u>Education and training (%)</u>			
Earned a GED	31.2	17.5	13.7 ***
Enrolled in vocational school since random assignment	30.8	20.4	10.3 ***
Received a trade license/training certificate	4.1	2.1	2.0 **
Enrolled in postsecondary courses since random assignment	23.6	18.1	5.6 ***
<u>Work and earnings</u>			
Employed at Month 30 (%)	44.4	44.8	-0.4
Average weekly earnings (\$)	150.2	134.5	15.7 *
<u>Youth development</u>			
Civic engagement ^a (%)	92.2	88.6	3.6 ***
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.3	3.3	0.0
<u>Criminal justice involvement (%)</u>			
Arrested since random assignment	27.6	26.4	1.3
Convicted since random assignment	15.7	14.1	1.6
Sample size (total = 2,808)	1,830	978	

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, and being involved in politics or local community activities.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

- **YouthBuild led to a small increase in employment rates during Year 2, and a small increase in survey-reported wages and earnings at 30 months.**

The opportunities for education and training in YouthBuild and the impact the program had on GED receipt should help participating young people to find jobs after completing the program. At the time of the 30-month survey, just over 40 percent of respondents in the program group

and the control group were employed; the program had no effect on employment reported on the survey. However, young people in the program group reported earning higher wages. The program led to an increase of 3 percentage points in the proportion of young people who reported earning at least \$10 per hour at their current jobs (not shown in the table). These higher hourly wages also translated into higher weekly earnings.

Data from the unemployment insurance system (not shown in the table) present a fuller picture over time. During the first year, while young people were participating in YouthBuild, the program led to a reduction in employment and earnings relative to the control group (whose members were less likely to be enrolled in a program and thus were more available to work). However, by Year 2, there was no difference in earnings between the two groups, and the program group had somewhat higher employment rates. Longer-term follow-up presented in the final report will assess whether the program group pulls farther ahead over time.

- **YouthBuild increased civic engagement, particularly volunteering, but had few effects on other measures of youth development or attitudes.**

YouthBuild has been a leader in integrating youth development into its programs by promoting leadership and community service. In addition, the programs receiving CNCS funding strongly emphasize community service. At 30 months, members of the YouthBuild group were more likely than members of the control group to report that they had volunteered or been involved in politics or local community activities. The largest impact occurred on volunteering: 54 percent of the program group reported volunteering, compared with only 31 percent of the control group (not shown).

A number of questions were included in the surveys to capture other aspects of youth development, such as self-esteem, self-confidence, feelings about the future, and feelings of social support. YouthBuild had no effect on responses to these questions. Other research on youth programs suggests that it is difficult to create lasting changes in many of these measures.⁵

- **YouthBuild had few effects on involvement in the criminal justice system.**

Participation in YouthBuild may lead to a number of positive changes for participants through effects on education, work, and youth development. For example, program participation should reduce the amount of time that young people spend hanging out idle, and thus reduce their opportunities to engage in risky and unhealthy activities. Yet at 30 months, the program had no effect on arrest or conviction rates. About 25 percent of the young people in the

⁵Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer Appleton Gootman, eds., *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2002).

study (in the program and control groups) reported that they had been arrested since they entered the study. Moreover, the program did lead to increases of about 5 percentage points in rates of self-reported alcohol and drug use (not shown in the table). It will be important to track whether these effects persist.

Conclusion

The findings presented here show that YouthBuild led to a number of positive effects, most consistently in the area of education and training. The program led to notable increases in GED receipt and participation in vocational training, and positive but small effects on college enrollment. A later report will examine whether these early increases in education and training lead to longer-term gains in work and earnings.

The research to date on youth programs has provided mixed results. Among the numerous programs studied, most increased the rate at which participants earned GEDs or other credentials, and had mixed effects on work and earnings.⁶ The effects found here follow suit. They are similar to or more positive than findings from other nonresidential programs, but somewhat smaller than the interim effects found for more intensive, residential programs, such as Job Corps and National Guard Youth ChalleNGe.

Although it is too early to make judgements about YouthBuild's effects overall, the findings here suggest that there may be room for improvement in at least a few areas: helping participants find jobs, preparing them for the transition to postsecondary education, and maintaining contact with them after they leave the program. In some cases, many programs are already beginning to make changes that are likely to strengthen their impact — for example, many are beginning to emphasize more heavily their efforts to create connections with colleges. Similarly, many programs are beginning to offer vocational training not only in construction but in other areas as well, for example in information technology and health care.

⁶See George Cave, Hans Bos, Fred Doolittle, and Cyril Toussaint, *JOBSTART: Final Report on a Program for School Dropouts* (New York: MDRC, 1993); JoAnn Jastrzab, Julie Masker, John Blomquist, and Larry Orr, *Evaluation of National and Community Service Programs. Impacts of Service: Final Report on the Evaluation of American Conservation and Youth Service Corps* (Washington, DC: Corporation for National Service, 1996); Cynthia Miller, Johannes M. Bos, Kristin E. Porter, Fannie M. Tseng, and Yasuyo Abe, *The Challenge of Repeating Success in a Changing World: Final Report on the Center for Employment Training Replication Sites* (New York: MDRC, 2005); Cristofer Price, Julie Williams, Laura Simpson, JoAnn Jastrzab, and Carrie Markovitz, *National Evaluation of Youth Corps: Findings at Follow-Up* (Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Strategy and Special Initiatives, 2011); Peter Z. Schochet, John Burghardt, and Sheena McConnell, "Does Job Corps Work? Impact Findings from the National Job Corps Study," *American Economic Review* 98, 5 (2008): 1,864-1,886; Megan Millenky, Dan Bloom, Sara Muller-Ravett, and Joseph Broadus, *Staying on Course: Three-Year Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation* (New York: MDRC, 2011).

Finally, when interpreting the program's effects, it is important to keep in mind two facts about the context. First, the effects presented here are estimated by comparing YouthBuild participants with similarly motivated young people who sought out other services in their communities. They are not estimated by comparing YouthBuild participants with a group who received no services. For this reason, the effects presented here are not of YouthBuild compared with no services, but of YouthBuild compared with other services for young people. Second, the follow-up period for this report was a time when many areas were still recovering slowly from the national recession that began in 2007, and when the national unemployment rate was still high for less-educated young people. One of YouthBuild's goals is to help these young people get an early advantage in the labor market. A later report will assess whether the program achieves that goal.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Changes in the labor market over the past several decades have made it tougher for many American workers to find and maintain well-paying jobs. Wages for those with less education have fallen over time, for example, contributing to an increase in inequality that has been well documented.¹ The recent recession worsened these trends. The unemployment rate was 15 percent at the end of 2009 for those without a high school diploma, compared with less than 5 percent for those with a college degree.²

Young people have been hit especially hard by these changes. Unemployment for individuals ages 16 to 24 increased the most during the recent recession, peaking at just over 19 percent in late 2009.³ Although the rate has fallen since then, the youth unemployment rate remains more than double that for adults.⁴ The unemployment rate for young people without high school diplomas is especially high, at over 20 percent in the second quarter of 2016.⁵ Rates of unemployment are even higher for black and Latino young men.⁶

As a result, it has become more and more difficult for many young people to make the transition to adulthood successfully. Those without high school diplomas — and there are nearly three million of them today — face particular challenges. Nearly 40 percent of them never earn high school credentials and even fewer pursue further education, even though postsecondary training is increasingly viewed as a necessary step on the path to a good job.⁷ Finding ways to reengage these young people in education and work and help them become thriving adults is one of our nation's central social policy challenges.

YouthBuild is one program that attempts to help this group. YouthBuild is a federally and privately funded program operated by over 250 organizations nationwide, serving over 10,000 young people each year. Each organization provides construction-related training and may also provide training in other in-demand industries, along with educational services, counseling, and leadership-development opportunities, to low-income, out-of-school young people ages 16 to 24. The vast majority of programs provide construction training as their

¹Piketty and Saez (2003), with updated tables at <http://eml.berkeley.edu/~saez>.

²U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015).

³U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016b).

⁴U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016b, 2016c).

⁵U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016a).

⁶U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016d).

⁷Hurst, Kelly, and Princiotta (2004).

vocational instruction; in these programs participants work on renovating or constructing housing for low-income or homeless people. YouthBuild distinguishes itself from other programs serving young people without high school diplomas through a program environment that emphasizes youth development and leadership, capitalizing on participants' strengths, and empowering participants to take responsibility for their lives.

In 2010, the Department of Labor (DOL), with initial support from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), awarded a contract to MDRC and its partners, Social Policy Research Associates and Mathematica Policy Research, to conduct an impact evaluation of YouthBuild programs funded by DOL or CNCS in 2011. The evaluation includes 75 programs across the country and nearly 4,000 young people who enrolled in the study between 2011 and 2013.

This report is the second in the evaluation.⁸ It presents the program's interim effects on young people two and a half years after they entered the study. The report examines effects on a range of outcomes, including participation in education and training, educational attainment, work and earnings, involvement in the criminal justice system, and civic engagement.

In sum, the findings presented here show that YouthBuild led to a number of positive effects, most consistently in the area of education and training. The program led to notable increases in the rate at which young people earned General Educational Development (GED) credentials and in their participation in vocational training, and positive but small effects on postsecondary enrollment.⁹ A later report will examine whether these early increases in education and training lead to longer-term gains in work and earnings. By Month 30, the program had a small positive effect on earnings and mixed effects on employment rates. The program also increased civic engagement, particularly volunteering, but had no effects on other measures of youth development.

YouthBuild

YouthBuild started in the late 1970s with one program in East Harlem, called the Youth Action Program (YAP). YAP allowed young people to improve their community by renovating and building housing while at the same time giving them the education and job training they needed. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, other programs modeled on YAP were developed under the

⁸The first report documented implementation at the 75 programs in the study (Wiegand et al., 2015).

⁹The term "GED" is used throughout this report to indicate a high school equivalency credential, even though many states no longer use the official GED test to grant those credentials. Given the timing of the YouthBuild evaluation, most study participants would still have taken the official GED exam to earn their high school equivalency credentials.

name “YouthBuild.” To support these replication efforts, staff members from YAP founded YouthBuild USA in 1990 to provide technical assistance and training to new YouthBuild programs. In 1992, under the umbrella of YouthBuild USA, a number of local YouthBuild programs came together to form the YouthBuild Affiliated Network made up of programs that agreed to uphold certain standards for performance and program design and to support advocacy efforts on behalf of the program and low-income young people.

The expansion of the program was initially supported by private grants and then later by the federal government. In the early 1990s, federal legislation allocated funds to be granted to YouthBuild programs through an annual, competitive process under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2007, responsibility for YouthBuild was transferred to DOL’s Employment and Training Administration. Each year, DOL awards grants based on a competitive review process that assesses past performance and community needs. The grants typically range in size from \$700,000 to \$1,100,000 and are intended to cover two years of program services for one or more cohorts of young people and 9 to 12 months of follow-up services.¹⁰ Grantees are also required to raise nonfederal funds to match 25 percent of the DOL grants they receive.

The YouthBuild network also receives funding from a variety of other public and private sources through grants to YouthBuild USA. For example, about 70 YouthBuild programs nationwide receive annual funding from CNCS through its grant to YouthBuild USA. These programs, called YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs, strongly emphasize community service and postsecondary enrollment.¹¹ Other sources of funding include state appropriations, education funding (based on average daily attendance), and foundation grants, among others.

The programs across the country are quite diverse in structure and size. Some programs are community-based organizations or faith-based organizations, while others are run by local government agencies or educational institutions. In addition, at least 40 YouthBuild programs are now diploma-granting schools. While the average program serves between 30 and 40 young people per year, some are quite small, serving 8 to 10 young people, while others serve 75 or more per year.¹²

¹⁰A “cohort” is a group of participants who join a program at the same time and move through it together.

¹¹A distinguishing feature of YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs is that participants are eligible for education awards when they complete YouthBuild. These awards range from about \$1,175 to \$5,500 depending on participants’ hours of service and other activities.

¹²One program in the evaluation served more than 200 young people each year.

The Model

The YouthBuild model includes a mix of education, vocational training (typically in construction), counseling, leadership development, and community service. Eligibility is usually limited to out-of-school young people ages 16 to 24 who have dropped out before completing high school and who meet one of the following criteria: They are from low-income or migrant families, are in foster care or are aging out of it, are ex-offenders, have disabilities, or are children of incarcerated parents.¹³

Programs recruit or rely on word of mouth to identify interested applicants, who then go through assessments before enrollment such as tests of basic skills and one-on-one interviews. Most programs then implement a rigorous Mental Toughness Orientation (MTO), which can last from a single day to several weeks. MTO is designed to facilitate group bonding and ready recruits for the program's activities. According to YouthBuild staff members, the top four activities conducted during MTO were team-building exercises, life-skills training, leadership development and community service, and academic work, all of which are also activities that young people participated in after officially enrolling in YouthBuild.¹⁴ It also serves as a period when young people are screened out because they stop attending or otherwise fail to follow established rules.

Most young people who make it through MTO enroll in YouthBuild, are offered the program's services, and participate for 6 to 12 months. New participants typically begin the program with a cohort of other new young people, and the cohort alternates between education and vocational training. For example, many programs use a weekly rotation in which young people participate in education one week and vocational training the next. The components of the model are intended to be integrated and are designed to be offered together, which distinguishes YouthBuild from other youth programs that may offer some of the same services.

YouthBuild's services consist of:

- **Educational services** such as instruction in basic skills, remedial education, and alternative education leading to a high school diploma or GED. A growing number of programs also offer services to prepare young people for post-secondary education.¹⁵

¹³A low-income family is defined as one whose income falls below 80 percent of median family income in the local area.

¹⁴See Wiegand et al. (2015) for more details on the content and structure of MTO.

¹⁵Efforts to promote college enrollment have been supported by several grants to YouthBuild USA and are also authorized and encouraged by DOL.

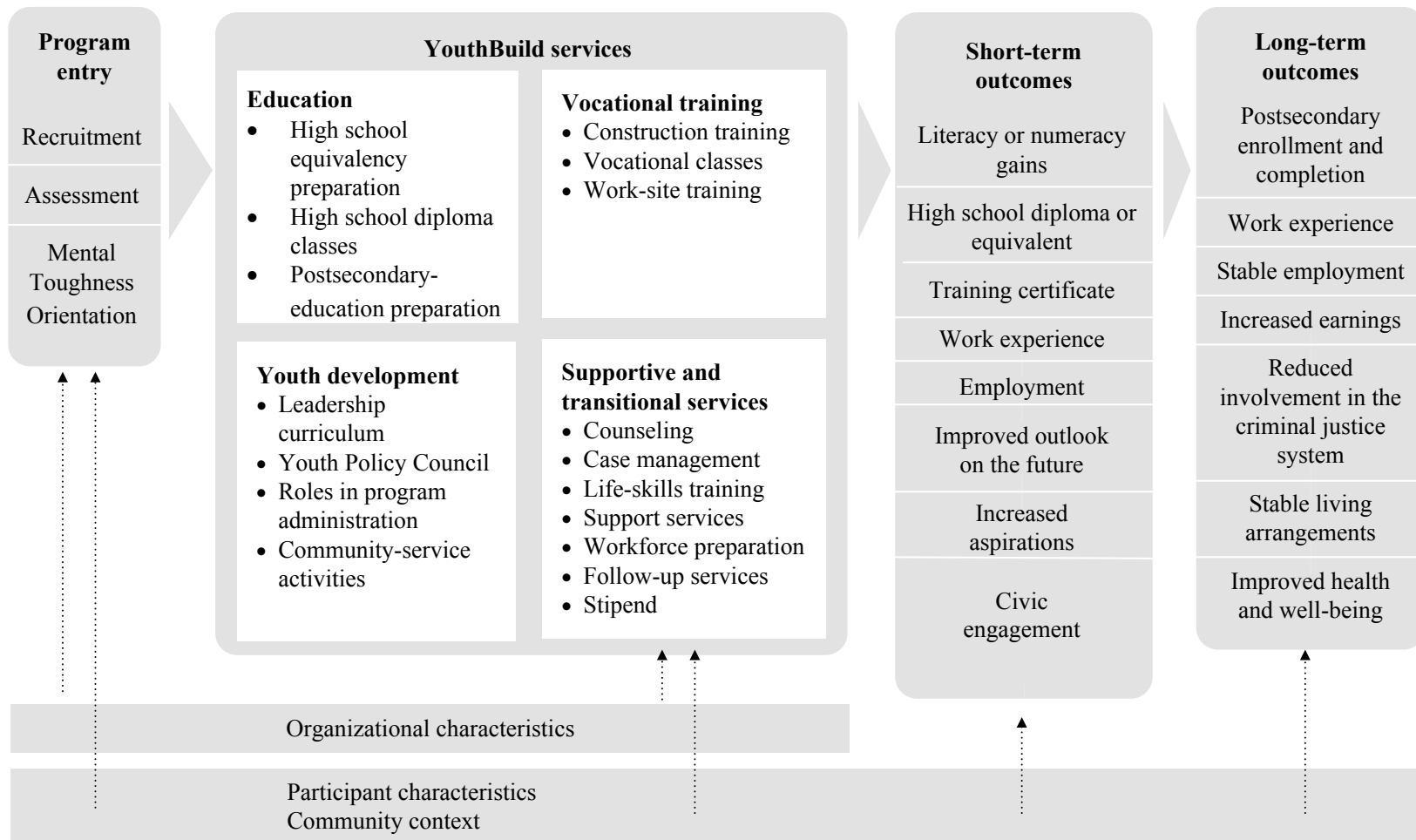
- **Vocational training**, typically training in construction in which participants rehabilitate or build housing for low-income people. Beginning in 2012, certain DOL-funded programs were authorized to provide a “construction plus” model, in which funding could be used to offer training for in-demand occupations outside construction. Before that date, some programs were already providing training for other vocations such as Certified Nursing Assistant, commercial driver, or information technology professional.
- **Youth-development services**, including leadership training and community service. These services are defining features of YouthBuild that are addressed in multiple ways and serve multiple purposes. Leadership training is approached through structured curricula or formal and informal roles for participants within the YouthBuild program on committees, in the classroom, on work sites, or in community activities and meetings. Young people participate in community service by constructing affordable housing and through other activities; this community service attends to the community’s needs, teaches the value of helping others, and provides opportunities for young people to practice leadership and other skills.
- **Supportive services and transition services** include counseling, case management, life-skills training, workforce preparation, follow-up services for one year, stipends for participation, and other forms of support, such as help with transportation, child care, or housing. All of these services are designed to help young people address challenges that may prevent them from achieving success in the program or beyond.

Its focus on youth development distinguishes YouthBuild from more traditional employment programs for young people. YouthBuild reflects a movement to empower young people, advocate for them, foster their civic engagement and activism, and encourage them to take on roles of responsibility and leadership in their personal lives and broader communities.

Together, the combination of services is hypothesized to create a number of positive changes for participants, which are shown in the rightmost boxes in Figure 1.1. In the short term, YouthBuild aims to increase participants’ basic skills and help them earn a GED or high school diploma. Young people in the program can also accumulate work experience at the work sites, earn training credentials, and find jobs. Less tangibly, YouthBuild aims to stimulate lasting changes in attitudes that will keep young people on a positive trajectory and increase their civic engagement. In the longer term, YouthBuild aims to see its participants enroll in and complete college, maintain stable employment, earn more money, and have less involvement than their peers in the criminal justice system.

Figure 1.1

Participant-Level YouthBuild Conceptual Framework



The bottom of Figure 1.1 shows that a variety of contextual factors can influence a participant's experience in YouthBuild and subsequent outcomes. A number of program features could also affect outcomes and impacts — chiefly the program's fidelity to the YouthBuild model. This report examines whether programs of varying fidelity have different effects, and whether YouthBuild has different effects on participants with different characteristics. For example, in visits to the programs conducted for the implementation study, staff members often mentioned that older participants seemed more ready to benefit from YouthBuild's services than their younger counterparts. This report therefore compares YouthBuild's effects on participants who were older when they entered the study (those 20 and older) with its effects on those who were younger (those under age 20).

Apart from fidelity to the YouthBuild model, a range of other factors might also affect outcomes, such as the intensity of Mental Toughness Orientation, the strength of a program's postsecondary preparation, or the strength and tenure of its leaders. A formal analysis of how such program features influence programs' impacts will appear in the final report.

The local context might also affect program impacts. For example, a program may have a smaller measurable effect in areas where there are a range of other options for educational and vocational services, since young people in the control group would have access to these services. In addition, the local economy might have important effects. As documented in the earlier implementation report, the programs participating in the evaluation are generally located in higher-poverty areas facing myriad challenges. Staff members described their neighborhoods as having dilapidated housing, little public transportation or other infrastructure, few job opportunities, and poor schools.¹⁶ In interviews for the implementation study (in 2012 and 2013), they also described the effects of the Great Recession — a halt in construction, business closures, and layoffs — and how these conditions hit hardest the young people they serve. Conditions had improved by the time they were interviewed, although not by much. Unemployment rates have fallen somewhat since 2009, but they still remain quite high for young people (see Figure 1.2).

The local economy can affect program impacts in two important ways. First, it affects what the program can offer young people. For example, the downturn in the housing market made it more difficult for programs to find new construction projects and thus good training opportunities for participating young people. Second, the economy, locally and more broadly, affects how participants fare after the program. Young people enrolled in the study between late 2011 and early 2013, so the follow-up period covered in this report ranges from 2012 through mid-2015. Unemployment rates were still quite high during this time, particularly for young

¹⁶Wiegand et al. (2015).

Figure 1.2
Unemployment Rates by Age



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016a).

people. It is not clear how the effects of an education and training program might vary with the economy. Recent research suggests that labor-market programs can have bigger effects in slower economic times, although the depth and longevity of the Great Recession was unlike any previous downturn over the last 75 years, and this research did not examine the question for young people specifically.¹⁷ Beyond unemployment rates, however, structural changes in the economy over the past several decades have led to reduced earnings opportunities for many workers. People with less education are more and more likely to work in low-paying service-sector jobs, and wages have even fallen in the higher-paying jobs traditionally available to less-

¹⁷Card et al. (2015).

educated workers.¹⁸ It will be important to keep this economic context in mind when interpreting the findings.

There have been a number of studies of YouthBuild over the past 20 years, although none were conducted as randomized controlled trials.¹⁹ Most studies have either documented program implementation or tracked YouthBuild graduates to assess how they fare after leaving the program. Ferguson and Snipes, for example, conducted a formative evaluation from 1991 to 1994 of the first five YouthBuild replication programs, documenting the challenges programs faced in achieving high fidelity to the model, and the essential features of the model that help young people succeed. Another study of YouthBuild graduates selected primarily from a subset of established YouthBuild programs found that YouthBuild graduates fared relatively well after leaving the program, with a majority either enrolled in school or training, or working and earning above a certain wage per hour.²⁰

The Evaluation

YouthBuild is now being evaluated using a random assignment design, in which eligible young people at participating programs around the country were assigned either to a program group, invited to enroll in YouthBuild, or to a control group, provided information on other services in the community. Young people assigned to the control group could not enroll in YouthBuild at the participating program for two years. The next chapter examines how many young people in the program group actually participated in YouthBuild services, and also the types of services in which the control group participated.

The evaluation consists of three components:

- **Process study.** This study examined the operations of the YouthBuild programs in the evaluation and the perceptions and experiences of the participating young people. The study assessed each program's fidelity to the YouthBuild model. Findings from the process study were presented in an earlier report.²¹
- **Impact study.** This study will track both the program and the control groups for four years using survey data and administrative records.²² The impact analysis will examine the program's effects on a wide range of outcomes, in-

¹⁸Kearney, Hershbein, and Boddy (2015).

¹⁹See, for example, Ferguson and Snipes (1994); Hahn, Leavitt, Horvat, and Davis (2004); Mitchell et al. (2003); Hahn and Leavitt (2007); and Cohen and Piquero (2009).

²⁰Hahn, Leavitt, Horvat, and Davis (2004).

²¹Wiegand et al. (2015).

²²Administrative records are data collected primarily for the management of programs and public services.

cluding enrollment in education and educational attainment, work and earnings, involvement in the criminal justice system, family structure, and social and emotional development. This report presents interim findings, and longer-term findings will be presented in the final report.

- **Cost-effectiveness study.** This analysis will estimate the costs of operating and running YouthBuild and compare these costs with any positive gains that are achieved. The results from this analysis will be included in the final report.

Program Selection

The programs selected for the evaluation include a mix of those receiving funding from DOL in 2011 and those receiving funding from CNCS. The first selection pool included the group of 74 programs that received grants from DOL (and in some cases CNCS as well, although this report refers to them as “DOL-funded programs”). Three of these programs were deemed unsuitable for the study and were dropped from the pool.²³ From the remaining 71 programs, 60 programs were randomly selected to participate in the study.²⁴ After discussions with program staff members and DOL, 2 of the 60 selected programs were subsequently dropped from the evaluation.²⁵ See Appendix A for more information about program selection.

The remaining programs were selected from a group of programs that did not receive DOL funding in 2011 but received relatively large grants from CNCS, through its National Direct Grant to YouthBuild USA.²⁶ DOL and CNCS chose to include the CNCS-funded programs in the evaluation in order to examine whether DOL-funded programs have different

²³Interviews with staff members at these three programs indicated that young people assigned to a control group would be likely to receive services that were very similar to YouthBuild services, which would provide a poor test of YouthBuild’s effects. These programs accounted for only 4 percent of the expected YouthBuild enrollment among all grantees.

²⁴Budget considerations prohibited selecting all 71 programs for the study. Programs were selected using probability-proportional-to-size sampling, in which larger programs representing more young people had a greater probability of selection. Selecting programs in this way meant that each program slot, or young person, had an equal chance of selection.

²⁵Several discussions with program and DOL staff members revealed that random assignment was not feasible at these two programs because they would not be able to enroll study participants during the evaluation’s intake period.

²⁶Discussions with DOL and YouthBuild USA staff members suggested that the study should draw from those programs that received grants of \$95,000 or more from CNCS. Of the 40 programs that received CNCS funding but not DOL funding in 2011, 24 programs received grants of \$95,000 or more.

impacts than CNCS-funded programs.²⁷ Of the 24 programs that received relatively large CNCS grants, 7 were deemed not suitable for the evaluation, leaving 17 CNCS-funded programs in the study.²⁸

In total, 75 programs were selected for the study: 58 DOL-funded programs and 17 CNCS-funded programs. Although effects are examined across all programs combined, it is important to remember that the group of CNCS-funded programs is not a random sample of such programs. However, as mentioned later, the programs in the evaluation look very similar to the broader population from which they were selected.

Program and Study Intake

The participating programs enrolled 3,929 young people into the study between August 2011 and January 2013.²⁹ The study team worked with each program to implement random assignment during one or more of its enrollment cycles during this period. The general procedure was to determine the number of suitable applicants for the program and offer available program slots to these young people through a lottery-like process. The programs used their normal selection processes as much as possible to create the eligible pool of applicants. Figure 1.3 illustrates a typical YouthBuild selection process, though the details varied slightly from program to program. Random assignment would then occur among that smaller, eligible pool of applicants.

As shown in the figure, the first step in intake was recruitment, which is typically a major activity for most programs. It involved considerable staff effort, in part because YouthBuild programs usually recruited many more applicants than they needed to fill their open slots. Excess applicants were needed because some applicants were determined to be ineligible or unsuitable for the program during screening, and others dropped out during screening. See Chapter 4 of the earlier implementation report for more detail on recruitment and screening.³⁰

Once recruited, the next step was to determine whether a young person met additional eligibility requirements beyond those listed above. Staff members reviewed young people's

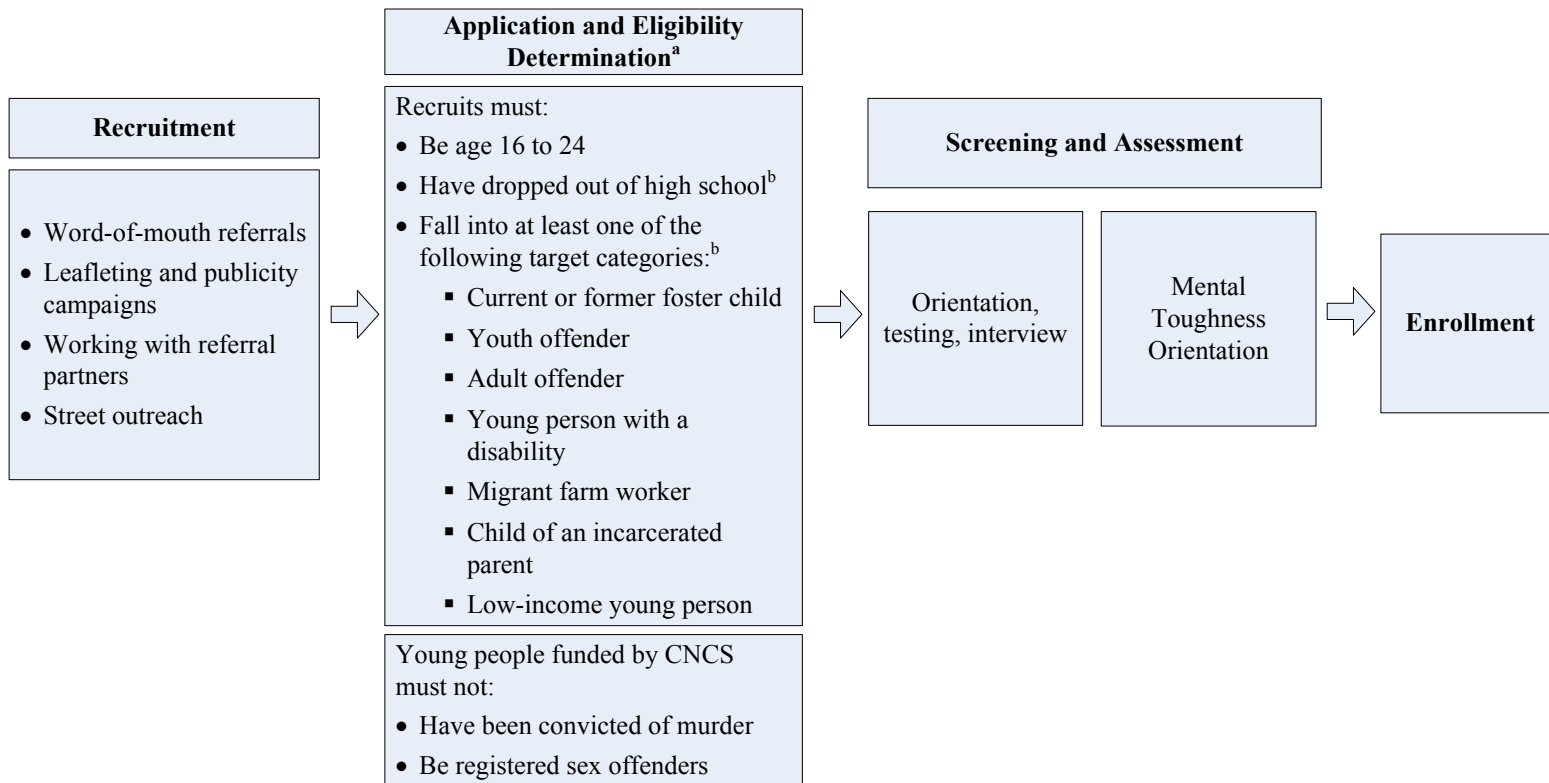
²⁷The funding-source distinction is not very clear-cut, however, since many of the DOL-funded programs also received CNCS grants. Similarly, several of the 17 CNCS-funded programs in the study received DOL grants in the subsequent year.

²⁸Four of the programs planned to shut down in the coming year, and three indicated that young people in the control group would be likely to receive services similar to YouthBuild services.

²⁹Three programs were unable to conduct random assignment during the intake period because their enrollment numbers were too low. These programs were included in the process study but are not included in the impact study.

³⁰Wiegand et al. (2015).

Figure 1.3
Typical YouthBuild Selection Process



SOURCES: U.S. Department of Labor (2014a), YouthBuild USA (2014), and YouthBuild site-visit interview data.

NOTES: ^aThese are the eligibility criteria required by the funders. Programs may use additional criteria.

^bAlthough YouthBuild is a program aimed at high school dropouts, 25 percent of participants in programs funded by DOL can be young people who are not high school dropouts, who have high school diplomas, or who are not in one of the target populations, as long as they are deficient in basic skills or are referred to a high school diploma-granting YouthBuild program by another high school.

application forms and conducted various assessments and interviews to determine whether applicants met these additional requirements. Most commonly, applicants had to live within certain geographical boundaries and have minimum math and reading scores on assessments of basic skills. At some point during the screening process, the majority of study programs administered an academic skills test, usually the Test of Adult Basic Education or the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems. Programs were divided in how they used these tests: Roughly half used them to screen out applicants who did not meet minimum test-score requirements, and the rest used them for diagnostic purposes, to establish a baseline for each applicant's skills and to determine what academic services that applicant needed.³¹ Some programs used additional criteria, such as not having a substance abuse problem, to determine whether a young person was appropriate for the program. Applicants who met these criteria were often described as having demonstrated "readiness," or a motivation to make positive changes in their lives.

After the initial screening process, young people were invited to MTO. As a result of the intensive application and screening, nearly half of the young people who turned in applications to the study programs did not receive invitations to MTO, either because they dropped out during the screening process or because the program decided they were not suitable for YouthBuild.³²

MTO is designed to determine young people's willingness to change, to gauge their interest and motivation, to build teamwork while they get to know one another, and to introduce them to the specifics of the YouthBuild program. The duration and intensity of MTO varied quite a bit; on average it lasted for 10 days and for seven hours per day. According to staff members at the study programs, the top four activities conducted during MTO were team-building exercises, life-skills training, leadership development and community service, and academic work, all of which are also activities that young people participated in after officially enrolling in YouthBuild.³³ Although it is an important step in the process, DOL does not count young people who do not complete MTO, and thus do not go on to receive core services, as program participants.

MTO also served as an additional form of screening. During MTO, staff members might determine that a young person was not ready for YouthBuild or not a good fit for the program and ask that person to stop attending, or a young person might stop attending and

³¹Programs that required a minimum score set that minimum at a sixth-grade reading level, on average. See Wiegand et al. (2015)

³²For example, a young person may not have fully participated in preprogram activities, or may have caused a disturbance while attending.

³³Wiegand et al. (2015).

therefore select him- or herself out of participation. An average of one in four recruits who were invited to MTO did not complete it.³⁴

An important issue for the study team was the timing of random assignment at each program. Would young people deemed eligible and appropriate for YouthBuild be randomly assigned to the program or the control group before MTO, sometime during MTO, or after they had completed MTO? One argument for conducting random assignment before MTO was that many staff members considered that orientation to be an important part of YouthBuild. Conducting random assignment before the orientation would ensure that young people assigned to the control group did not receive any of the YouthBuild program. However, an argument for conducting random assignment after MTO was that many young people drop out of this orientation before going on to receive YouthBuild's core services. Conducting random assignment before the orientation would therefore also mean that many young people assigned to the program group would never receive YouthBuild services, which would hinder the study's ability to detect program impacts. Ultimately, the decision about when to conduct random assignment was made by each program, with input from the study team. Most programs (81 percent of programs, representing 75 percent of study participants) opted to conduct random assignment before MTO or during its first few days.³⁵

In order to ensure an adequate number of young people for available slots, the study team aimed for a random assignment ratio in which 60 percent of eligible young people would be assigned to the program group and 40 percent to the control group. In practice, some programs had difficulty securing enough excess applicants to meet this 60:40 ratio and were allowed to deviate from it if necessary. On average, 69 percent of eligible young people were randomly assigned to the YouthBuild group and 31 percent were assigned to the control group. Only about 12 percent of programs (representing 16 percent of study participants) used a ratio above 80:20.

Data and Methods

The analysis presented in this report is based on several data sources. First, surveys were administered to a random subset of study participants 12 and 30 months after they entered the study. The surveys obtained information on participation in education and training, educational attainment, work, family formation, and involvement in the criminal justice system. Both surveys achieved 80 percent response rates with very small differences in response rates

³⁴Wiegand et al. (2015).

³⁵The timing of random assignment was found to have no effect on the percentage of young people in the program group who ultimately went on to receive the core YouthBuild services. Similarly, program impacts for those programs that conducted random assignment before MTO or within its first few days were similar to the impacts for programs that conducted random assignment later (not shown).

between the program and control groups.³⁶ A total of 2,845 participants provided responses to the 12-month survey, and 2,808 participants provided responses to the 30-month survey.

Administrative records on employment and earnings were obtained for the full sample from the National Directory of New Hires, which provides quarterly wage data for existing workers in employment covered by the unemployment insurance system. These data will miss employment that is not covered by unemployment insurance, including informal work and self-employment. Data on postsecondary enrollment were obtained for the full sample from the National Student Clearinghouse, which tracks enrollment and degree receipt nationally. Although it captures over 90 percent of postsecondary enrollment in the United States, its coverage varies for different types of institutions. Its coverage is highest for public institutions and lowest for for-profit institutions.³⁷ Thus, both types of records are important complements to the surveys, but they may miss some types of employment and postsecondary enrollment.

A grantee survey was administered in fall 2012 to all 110 YouthBuild programs funded by DOL, CNCS, or both during the evaluation period, including those programs selected for the study. The survey asked administrators to provide information about programs' years in operation, funders, operating budgets, staff structures and staff experience levels, construction-work-site characteristics, recent recruitment and enrollment experiences, stipends, and program-component characteristics. These data are used to compare the study programs with the larger population of programs from which they were drawn.

Finally, all programs receiving DOL funding are required to enter data on participant characteristics, service receipt, and outcomes into the DOL YouthBuild management information system.³⁸ The study used these data to assess the reliability of the findings on YouthBuild participation shown in the surveys. All programs receiving CNCS funding entered quarterly data into a separate management information system. While these data do not provide detailed information on participation, they do indicate formal enrollment status.

Because young people were randomly assigned either to the program group or to the control group, the effects of the program can be estimated as the differences between the two groups' outcomes. (Appendix Table A.2 presents a comparison of the characteristics of the program and control groups, showing that the two groups were similar on average when they enrolled in the study.) These differences between the full program and control groups (often referred to as "intent-to-treat" effects) are the main focus of this report and represent the effect of the program on the average outcomes of young people assigned to the program group,

³⁶Appendix B includes a detailed analysis of survey response rates.

³⁷Dynarski, Hemelt, and Hyman (2015).

³⁸A management information system is a database that holds information on program operations and that can produce reports on every level of a program's management.

whether or not they participated in YouthBuild. Occasionally the text will mention “impacts per participant” (sometimes referred to in other research as “treatment-on-the-treated” effects), which represent the effects of the program on those young people in the program group who actually participated in YouthBuild. Effects per participant are estimated by dividing the effects on the full program group by the fraction of the program group who participated in YouthBuild.

Impacts are estimated for each outcome using regression models in which the outcome of interest is regressed on an indicator for program status and several variables measured at or before the time of random assignment. These additional variables improve the precision of the impact estimates; they include the participant’s age, sex, education level, parent status, and race/ethnicity. Variables are also included for each individual program in order to account for variation in the random assignment ratio among participating programs. See Appendix A for more detail.

Finally, as the number of outcomes that are examined increases, the probability of obtaining impacts that are statistically significant simply by chance also increases. Although the estimates in this report are not formally adjusted to account for multiple hypothesis testing, the analysis does attempt to address this risk by limiting the number of outcomes examined. In addition, effects that do not appear to be part of a larger pattern are given less emphasis in the discussion.

Characteristics of Participating Programs and Young People

Study Programs

Table 1.1 presents selected characteristics of the 75 programs in the study. (See the process report for more detail.) Most programs were operated by nonprofit organizations, most of which were local or regional nonprofits, including community development corporations, community action agencies, and local American Job Centers.³⁹

The study programs were spread across 29 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, DC, and along a continuum from densely populated urban centers to rural areas (see Figure 1.4). Roughly 50 percent of YouthBuild programs were concentrated in or near major metropolitan areas with populations of a million or more (for example, New York City and Los Angeles) while about 20 percent were located in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000 (for example, Bemidji, Minnesota, and Hammond, Louisiana). These differing geographies have implications for recruitment, service delivery, and the availability of jobs.

³⁹American Job Centers are the one-stop centers authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 to provide employment and training services to job seekers and workers.

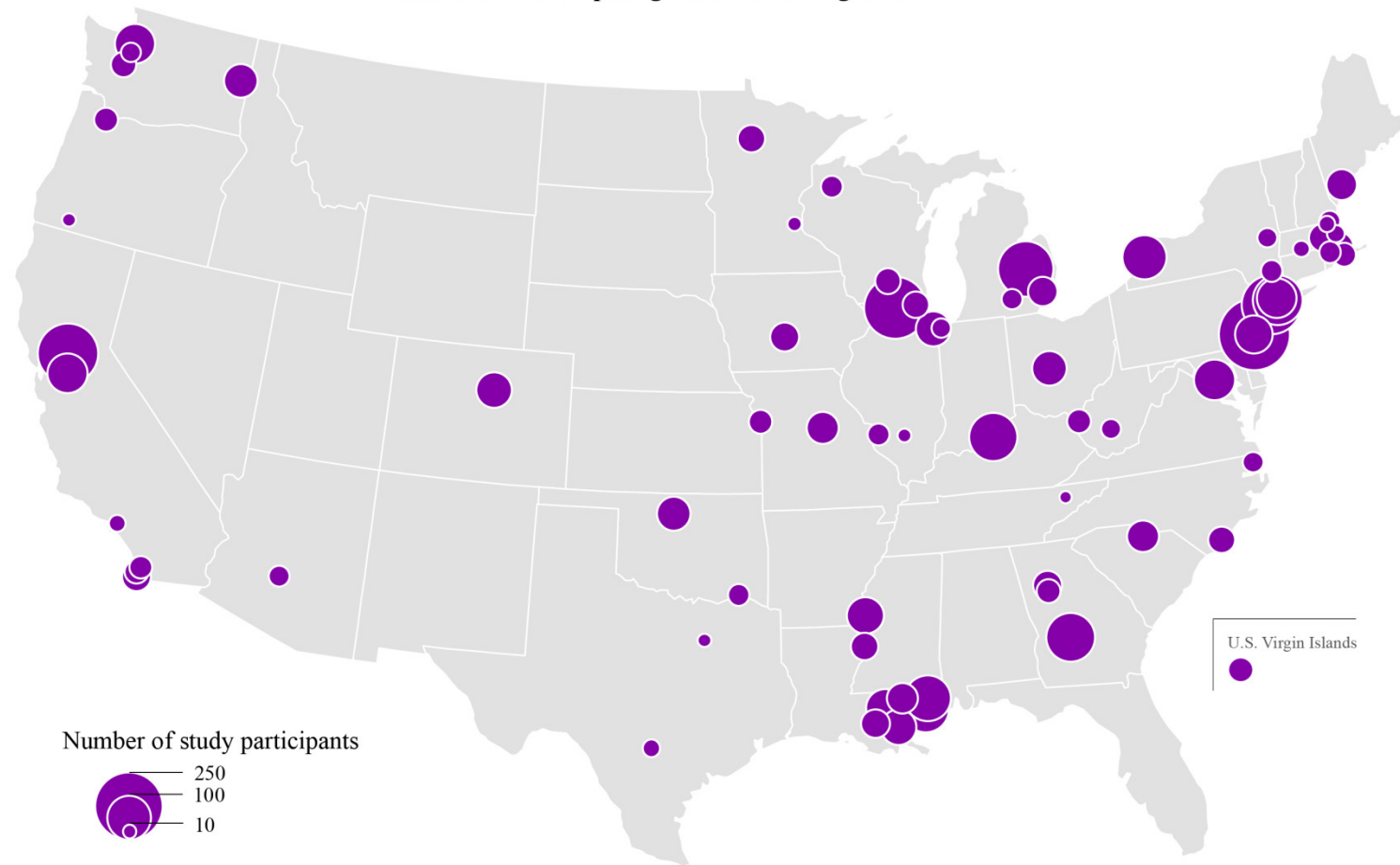
Table 1.1
Summary of Program Characteristics

Program Response	Percentage of Programs	Percentage of Participants
<u>Type of organization</u>		
Nonprofit	82.7	87.9
National nonprofit	12.0	9.2
Local/regional nonprofit	70.7	78.7
Other	17.3	12.1
Public agency	10.7	7.4
Community college	4.0	3.3
School district	2.7	1.5
<u>Geography^a</u>		
Large metro, central	34.7	44.2
Large metro, fringe	17.3	12.0
Medium metro	18.7	24.2
Small metro	8.0	2.3
Rural	21.3	17.4
<u>Years in community</u>		
Less than 20	28.0	35.8
Between 20 and 50	56.0	53.5
More than 50	16.0	10.8
<u>Years operating YouthBuild</u>		
Less than 6	24.0	29.3
Between 6 and 10	36.0	32.1
More than 10	40.0	38.7
<u>YouthBuild USA affiliation status</u>		
No affiliation status	16.0	15.5
Provisional affiliate	20.0	24.1
Full affiliate	50.7	43.8
Accredited affiliate	13.3	16.7
<hr/>		
Sample size	75	3,929

SOURCES: Calculations based on YouthBuild site-visit interview data, National Center for Health Statistics data, and affiliation information from YouthBuild USA.

NOTE: ^aGeography is based on the National Center for Health Statistics scheme. For this table, micropolitan and noncore were combined to create the rural category listed here. The U.S. Virgin Islands were assigned a code based on total population and population density information from the 2010 U.S. Census. Examples: Large metro, central: Atlanta, GA, and New York, NY; large metro, fringe: Gary, IN, and Tacoma, WA; medium metro: Spokane, WA, and Springfield, MA; small metro: Columbia, MO, and Jackson, MI; rural: Hammond, LA, and Traverse City, MI.

Figure 1.4
Locations of Participating YouthBuild Programs



SOURCE: YouthBuild study sample and program information.

The ages of organizations operating YouthBuild also varied. They were generally well established, with a large majority having been in their communities for at least 20 years. The YouthBuild programs themselves ranged in age from 3 to 33 years, with an average of 10 years.

Finally, some YouthBuild programs were affiliates of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network while others were not. Affiliate programs have access to additional funding and other types of program support, including AmeriCorps funding from CNCS and technical assistance. Three levels of affiliation — provisional, full, and accredited — are intended to describe a range of YouthBuild programs, from “provisional” status for programs in the planning and development phase to “accredited” status for well-established programs that meet YouthBuild USA performance standards and have demonstrated fidelity to the YouthBuild model. Nearly 85 percent of programs in the evaluation were part of the YouthBuild USA network, and almost 65 percent were full or accredited affiliates.

Overall, the programs in the evaluation represent a wide variety of types. Some are in small towns and serve only a handful of young people each year, while others are in very large cities and enroll several cohorts per year. Some are just one program run by much larger umbrella organizations, while others are the main programs in their organizations, or even stand alone. This variety is also evident in the larger population of programs from which the evaluation programs were drawn. As shown in Appendix Table A.1, the programs participating in the study look very similar to this broader population of all programs that received funding from DOL or CNCS in 2011.⁴⁰

Study Participants

Table 1.2 presents selected characteristics of participating young people when they enrolled in the study. The majority of participants are male (64 percent) and most are either black (63 percent) or Latino (15 percent). On average, study participants were nearly 20 years old when they entered the study, with about 70 percent older than age 18.

About 10 percent of young people had a high school diploma or GED when they entered the study. Although the program targets young people who have dropped out of high

⁴⁰A formal test of external validity was conducted for the DOL-funded programs, comparing the 60 programs selected for the study with the broader sample of 74 DOL grantees. That test suggested that results from the DOL-funded program sample can be taken to represent (generalize to) the broader sample of grantees. However, a test was not conducted for the full sample of programs, since the group of CNCS-funded programs was not a random sample of programs receiving funding from CNCS. Nonetheless, as noted in the text, the study programs generally look similar to the broader population from which they were drawn.

Table 1.2
Baseline Characteristics of the YouthBuild Sample

Characteristic	Percentage of Participants
<u>Age</u>	
16-18 years old	33.0
19-21 years old	46.3
22 years old or older	20.7
Male (%)	64.1
<u>Race/ethnicity^a</u>	
Hispanic or Latino	14.6
White, non-Hispanic	15.3
Black, non-Hispanic	62.9
Other ^b	6.0
Not specified	1.1
Has a child	30.0
<u>Highest grade completed^c</u>	
7th	1.0
8th	7.5
9th	18.6
10th	26.2
11th	34.9
12th	10.0
Has a high school diploma or equivalent	9.2
Has a diagnosed disability (learning or physical)	10.6
<u>Housing status</u>	
Lives with family	61.0
Owns/rents apartment, room, or house	15.2
Is staying at someone's apartment, room, or house	15.7
Is staying with foster guardian/in foster system	0.6
Lives in a halfway house/transitional house	1.2
Is homeless	3.0

(continued)

Table 1.2 (continued)

Characteristic	Percentage of Participants
<u>Who suggested you apply to YouthBuild?</u>	
Family member or relative	29.8
No one	32.5
School counselor, truant officer, teacher, or principal	4.3
Friend	20.7
Other	9.7
<u>Reasons for applying to YouthBuild</u>	
GED	87.7
College	63.1
To get life on track	88.2
Job	84.6
Training	67.2
Friends	7.0
Because of children or the need to support family	1.5
Other	4.4
Sample size	3,929

SOURCE: Calculations based on the YouthBuild baseline data form.

NOTES: ^aCategories are mutually exclusive.

^b"Other" includes Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan, and responses of multiple races/ethnicities.

^cThis information is missing for some sample members.

school, funding guidelines allow programs to enroll some high school graduates.⁴¹ Most of those who dropped out of high school did so after completing either tenth or eleventh grade, although about a third of them had completed ninth grade or less. As noted in the process study, many program staff members reported that participants typically had reading and math levels equivalent to middle school, even if they had completed some high school.

⁴¹Specifically, 25 percent of participants in programs funded by DOL can be young people who are not high school dropouts, who have high school diplomas, or who are not in one of the target groups, as long as they are deficient in basic skills or "have been referred by a local secondary school for participation ... leading to attainment of a secondary school diploma."

Most young people reported that they decided on their own to enroll in YouthBuild or that they were referred to the program by family or friends. The most common reasons for applying to the program were to “get their life on track,” to obtain a GED, and to get a job. Fewer participants — though still more than half — listed “college” (63 percent) or “training” (67 percent) as reasons for applying.

Findings from Other Youth Programs

There have been a number of rigorous evaluations of programs for young people who have not completed high school. Overall, the programs tended to increase the rates at which participants received GEDs or other credentials, but they had less consistent effects on employment and earnings. To help place the YouthBuild evaluation and findings in this larger context, this section briefly discusses findings from several of these programs. The evaluation of YouthBuild, which also provides education and training services and which targets a similar population of young people as the programs discussed below, will add to the evidence base regarding what works to help disadvantaged young people. As did the evaluations listed below, because it is a randomized controlled trial the YouthBuild evaluation will provide the most rigorous level of evidence regarding the program’s effects.

The JOBSTART Demonstration was an early attempt to test what might work for disadvantaged young people. The programs in the demonstration were modeled on Job Corps (discussed below) but unlike Job Corps they offered their services in a nonresidential setting, as a way to test a less intensive and expensive model and one that might be available to a wider range of young people who might not be willing or able to live away from home while participating. Programs in the demonstration operated at 13 sites in the mid-1980s, serving young people who had not completed high school and had low reading levels. The evaluation found that the program led to sizable increases in GED receipt (of 13 percentage points), but had few effects on work or earnings through four years.⁴² The exception was that one program, the Center for Employment and Training (CET) in San Jose, California, produced relatively large increases in earnings. However, when the CET model was later replicated in 12 other locations, an evaluation found no increases in earnings through four and a half years.⁴³

The American Conservation and Youth Service Corps (which, like YouthBuild, emphasizes community service) offers participants temporary, full-time subsidized work in community service projects, along with case management, basic adult education and opportunities to earn college credits, and training in job-readiness skills. An impact evaluation in the late 1990s found

⁴²Cave, Bos, Doolittle, and Toussaint (1993).

⁴³Miller et al. (2005).

that more than a year after entering the study, Corps participants were more likely to have worked than control group members, and had also worked more hours.⁴⁴ However, a more recent and more comprehensive study of 21 Corps programs found no significant effects on educational attainment or work after 30 months.⁴⁵

Both of these evaluations studied nonresidential programs, but some other, more intensive programs for disadvantaged young people — Job Corps and National Guard Youth ChalleNGe, for example — ask participants to leave their homes and live at the program site for a number of months. Job Corps, funded by DOL, is a national program serving disadvantaged young people ages 16 to 24. Young people participate in three phases of the program, first getting acclimated to the program’s culture and expectations, next participating in education and career-skills training (during which they receive modest stipends), and finally transitioning into employment and follow-up services after they go home.

An evaluation of the program, launched in 1994, found that the average young person participated in the program for about eight months, and that it led to large increases in GED receipt and in the receipt of vocational certificates. For example, 42 percent of the program group earned a GED within four years after entering the study, compared with 27 percent of the control group. The program had no effects on college attendance. Job Corps is one of the few youth programs that led to positive effects on employment and earnings, although those effects faded after the fourth year of study follow-up. However, earnings gains did persist for older study participants (those who were ages 20 to 24 when they enrolled).⁴⁶

National Guard Youth ChalleNGe serves a slightly younger population: 16- to 18-year-olds who have dropped out of high school. Participants engage in a five-month intensive residential program that includes eight core components: education, life skills, leadership skills, community service, citizenship building, physical fitness, health and hygiene, and job-skills training and career exploration. The program also helps participants set up structured mentoring for at least a year with mentors of their choice in their own communities, so that they have some support after they leave the program. A three-year study found that participants were more likely than their control group counterparts to have obtained high school credentials and to have earned college credits.⁴⁷ By Year 3, for example, 57 percent of the program group had received a GED, compared with 35 percent of the control group. The program also led to an increase in employment and earnings in Year 3. Longer-term follow-up is not available. See Appendix Table A.3 for more information on several evaluations of programs for young people.

⁴⁴Jastrzab, Masker, Blomquist, and Orr (1996).

⁴⁵Price et al. (2011).

⁴⁶Schochet, Burghardt, and McConnell (2008).

⁴⁷Millenky, Bloom, Muller-Ravett, and Broadus (2011).

Organization of This Report

The remainder of the report presents findings on participation in YouthBuild (among young people assigned to the program group) and program effects. Chapter 2 summarizes the findings from the process study on program implementation, presents data on participation in YouthBuild, and describes impacts on participation in education and training. Chapter 3 presents the program's effects on a range of outcomes, including educational attainment, work and earnings, measures of youth development, and involvement in the criminal justice system. Chapter 4 presents effects on important outcomes for selected subgroups, and Chapter 5 concludes.

Chapter 2

Implementation and Participation

This chapter discusses the program implementation findings, participating young people's experiences with the YouthBuild program, and young people's participation in YouthBuild and other services. The first section reviews findings from the earlier implementation report. The next section presents follow-up survey responses on young people's participation in YouthBuild and level of satisfaction with the program. The third section presents impacts on participation in education, training, and other services.

Implementation Findings

In 2015, the first report of this evaluation was released, *Adapting to Local Context*, presenting implementation findings for the 75 participating YouthBuild programs.¹ Extensive implementation data were collected and analyzed for that report, including multiday visits to each participating program and an online survey of programs.² The participating programs were very diverse and were representative of the YouthBuild programs operating nationwide at the time. They varied in their geographic locations, the lengths of time they had been in their communities, their organizational structures, and their funding and staffing arrangements. Overall, the evaluation found that programs were implementing the YouthBuild model faithfully.

It is worth noting, however, that the YouthBuild program model described in Chapter 1 is not highly prescriptive. Instead, it is designed to allow variation based on program and community contexts. For example, there was considerable variation in the format of the educational services offered by different YouthBuild programs. Yet even though the content and format of classes varied from program to program, most shared the goal of providing participants individually tailored instruction and academic support. Small class sizes helped to promote positive relationships between instructors and participants. For vocational training, about a fifth of programs in the evaluation offered training in fields other than construction, such as health care, culinary arts, and computer technology. Training staff members reported often being stretched thin, and staff members overall reported that the economic downturn had significantly affected programs' ability to implement construction-related vocational training. Specifically, it limited programs' ability to provide quality construction experiences to participants and limited the marketability of the job skills programs taught. Programs grappled with

¹Wiegand et al. (2015).

²Details of this "grantee survey" are discussed in Chapter 1.

ways to diversify their operations through new partnerships and to provide new training opportunities for participants.

Programs embraced the “culture” and value system of YouthBuild to varying degrees. This variation appeared most often in the leadership development component, a defining feature of YouthBuild, as noted in Chapter 1. While fidelity to the YouthBuild program model was high overall, not all programs were equally faithful in implementing the leadership development component. For example, a quarter of the participating programs did not have a functioning Youth Policy Council, a committee of students that plays an active role in setting decisions and policies that affect the program.³ Programs that did not implement the leadership development component as faithfully as others often had fewer resources and less ability to dedicate staff time to these activities.

Many programs adopt flexible staffing arrangements to deliver supportive, transition, and follow-up services. Programs often needed to distribute the delivery of these services across multiple staff members. For example, fewer than half of the programs had a designated job developer to give participants assistance with job searches and job placement. Programs also often combined life-skills and work-readiness training into one class, diluting their intensity but meeting the requirement to offer these services.

YouthBuild programs typically were not alone in providing services to young adults in the communities where they operated. Although all the communities in this evaluation had other organizations offering some of the same services as YouthBuild, these alternative services rarely matched the breadth and scope of those provided by YouthBuild. The services were usually not all available through the same provider. Therefore, it was possible for a young person to gain access to the same service components as provided by YouthBuild, but he or she would need to visit multiple providers to do so, and it seems unlikely that those providers would have coordinated their services. Similarly, few alternative programs in these communities seemed to create empowering environments among their participants that could rival the environments developed by most of the YouthBuild programs in this study.

Participation in YouthBuild

Young people were asked about their participation in YouthBuild in the two follow-up surveys. Most participants had left the program before the 12-month survey. Because the 12-month survey took place closest to the time when young people would have received services, its data

³Programs must have an active Youth Policy Council in order to become members of YouthBuild USA’s Affiliated Network. However, it is not an element that the U.S. Department of Labor requires of its grantees.

are presented in Table 2.1. (Appendix Table C.1 reports the corresponding data from the survey conducted at 30 months.)

At 12 months, 74 percent of the program group reported that they had received YouthBuild services or participated in YouthBuild activities at some point in the past. This definition is broad, and does not necessarily indicate that a young person formally enrolled in YouthBuild.⁴ As discussed in Chapter 1, in many cases random assignment occurred after Mental Toughness Orientation (MTO), so a survey respondent's report of "participating" in YouthBuild might only mean that he or she had attended some part of MTO. However, these survey responses can be compared in some locations with the programs' administrative data on participation. Among the 69 programs with available enrollment data (representing 87 percent of the young people in the research sample), 73 percent of the program group formally enrolled in YouthBuild (not shown in the table).⁵ The fact that the participation rates shown in these two data sources are so similar suggests that a significant portion of the program group did participate in YouthBuild beyond MTO. It also means that a quarter of the program group participated in the YouthBuild application process and MTO at the most. As noted earlier, this report will present selected "impacts per participant" to adjust for this less-than-100-percent participation rate.

Among those who reported receiving services, young people remained in YouthBuild for an average of eight months, and 50 percent reported completing the program. Once involved in program activities, most young people (87 percent) participated for more than three months. Again, these findings indicate that young people participated in YouthBuild beyond MTO and that the program staff members were able to engage them in the program model. In addition, 22 percent of survey respondents said they were still enrolled in the program at the time of the 12-month survey.

These participation levels are similar to those found in other evaluations of youth programs. Job Corps' program participation rate was also 73 percent, and young people reported staying in the program for an average of eight months.⁶ In the National Guard Youth ChallengeNGe evaluation, 83 percent of the program group "registered" and began the residential pre-ChallengeNGe orientation phase. Within that group, 64 percent completed the program.⁷

⁴The timing of "enrollment" — and the definition of the term — varied among the 75 participating programs, so it was not possible to ask in the survey interviews about formal enrollment into core YouthBuild services.

⁵Three programs did not enter the majority of their participants into either management information system available for this analysis. Due to their funding sources, these programs used their own management information systems.

⁶Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman (2001).

⁷Bloom, Gardenhire-Crooks, and Mandsager (2009).

Table 2.1

YouthBuild Program Experience, Program Group Only, at 12 Months

Survey Response	YouthBuild Group
Ever received YouthBuild services (%)	73.6
<i>Current status, among those who ever received YouthBuild services</i>	
Currently enrolled	22.4
Graduated from the program	49.6
No longer enrolled and did not graduate	28.0
Reasons for not participating in or not completing the program (%)	
Transportation	32.0
Incarceration	10.2
Program schedule	20.0
Another job	23.3
Moved	19.7
Birth of a child or child care problems	16.3
Health issue or family pressure	19.1
Conflict with the program, staff members, or other participants	21.7
Expulsion or being asked to leave	19.4
Another reason	27.2
<u>Among those who participated</u>	
Months spent in YouthBuild	7.7
In YouthBuild for more than 1 month (%)	95.6
In YouthBuild for more than 3 months (%)	87.0
Received a stipend from YouthBuild (%)	84.2
Feel close to a YouthBuild staff person (%)	83.8
Rated program, program component, or staff favorably ^a (%)	
Overall YouthBuild experience	87.4
Construction or other job training	88.8
Counseling	81.9
Leadership training	86.8
Help finding a job	68.7
Help applying to college	77.7
Understanding your needs	80.0
Helping you solve problems	78.9
Helping you learn	86.5
Helping after you left YouthBuild	64.4
Staying in contact after you graduated	75.5
Sample size	1,830

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTE: ^aIndicates a response of "very good" or "good." The other response options were "okay," "poor," and "does not apply to me."

Young people in the program group described a variety of reasons for either never attending the program or not completing it. Table 2.1 presents the reasons they provided at 12 months. Thirty-two percent reported transportation issues and 23 percent had found another job. In the earlier implementation report, staff members also reported transportation as a major impediment to attendance. Other common reasons for not attending included family or health issues and a dislike of the program (the schedule, staff, or other participants). Notably, 10 percent reported being incarcerated, and a slightly smaller percentage said that they stopped attending because the program closed (not shown).⁸

Overall, those who attended YouthBuild rated the services they received and the program's staff favorably. Highly rated program services included the general program experience, the construction or job-training component, the counseling, and the leadership training. Similarly, 84 percent of participating young people reported feeling close to a YouthBuild staff person and rated the staff favorably on understanding participants' needs and helping them learn.

Although the ratings they gave in these areas were still fairly high, young people seemed slightly less satisfied with the services they received after they left the program — such as assistance finding a job or other forms of help — and with the staff members who delivered them. Some young people were in contact with the program relatively frequently after they left, while others were in contact relatively infrequently. Specifically, at 30 months young people were asked how frequently they were in contact with staff members from the program after they left. As shown in Table 2.2, 25 percent said they were in contact at least once a month and another 26 percent reported contact several times per year. The remaining half of the program group reported they were in contact once per year or not at all. Note that when young people were asked this question at 30 months, most had been out of YouthBuild for almost two years, which is well beyond the 12-month period for which programs receive funding to provide postprogram follow-up services.

⁸Program data from YouthBuild USA indicate that 13 programs closed after serving the cohorts that participated in the evaluation. Young people who said on the 12-month survey that their programs closed are probably not referring to those 13 programs, since those programs closed after serving the cohorts in the YouthBuild evaluation.

Table 2.2**YouthBuild Program Experience, Program Group Only, at 30 Months**

Survey Response (%)	YouthBuild Group
Rated program favorably ^a	
Caring staff	90.5
Safe and positive environment	90.0
Community service	92.6
Frequency of contact with YouthBuild staff members after leaving the program	
More than once a month	9.7
About once a month	15.0
A few times per year	25.6
Once per year	13.6
Not at all	36.2
Sample size	1,811

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTE: ^aIndicates a response of "very good" or "good." The other response options were "okay," "poor," and "does not apply to me."

These participant ratings echo the findings about transition and postprogram services presented in the implementation report. They also echo an earlier study that surveyed YouthBuild graduates and found that many of them wanted more contact with the program after graduation.⁹ Most programs did not have staff members dedicated to cultivating employers, identifying job openings, and placing people in jobs. Smaller programs especially felt constrained by funding and were unable to devote enough staff time to support young people with job searches and job placement. Staff members said it was sometimes challenging to follow up with participants after they left the program because their living situations and contact information changed frequently. Other challenges to follow-up included a lack of staff time and difficulty getting alumni to come to YouthBuild offices.

⁹Levine (2012).

Young people enrolled in the study and assigned to the control group were prohibited from enrolling in the participating YouthBuild program for two years. As noted earlier, these sample members were given information about other appropriate services in the community. An analysis of administrative program data shows that fewer than 1 percent of control group members formally enrolled in participating YouthBuild programs following random assignment (not shown). Note that this program information was only available for 69 programs, representing 87 percent of the young people in the study sample. In addition, at the time of the evaluation there were 12 cities that were home to multiple YouthBuild programs, including programs not participating in the evaluation. Unfortunately, it is not possible to measure control group participation at YouthBuild programs not involved in the evaluation. About 18 percent of the young people in the control group did report on the 12-month survey that they had participated in YouthBuild. However, the question was asked in a very general way and could include a young person's participation in the application process and Mental Toughness Orientation, in some cases. The fact that YouthBuild's administrative data list fewer than 1 percent of control group members as enrolled in YouthBuild suggests that these control group members did not formally participate in the program.

Impacts on Service Receipt

The integration of education, vocational, and support services in the YouthBuild model suggests that young people in the program group should receive more and a wider range of services than their control group counterparts. As discussed in Chapter 1, these services, combined with the contextual factors of the program, the participants, and the community, can lead to positive outcomes for participating young people. However, young people who made it through the lengthy screening process were a motivated group at the time they applied. Therefore, the young people assigned to the control group are likely to have sought out alternative services on their own. This section examines the differences between the two groups in participation in educational, vocational, and other services.

One year after random assignment, both research groups had participated in many services, but the program group had participated at statistically significantly higher rates in all types of services.¹⁰ As shown in Table 2.3, services were divided into three domains that reflect the YouthBuild program model: education, job training, and personal development. Young

¹⁰As noted in Chapter 1, impacts are estimated using a regression framework in which the outcome of interest is regressed on an indicator variable for program status, plus additional variables measured at or before participants entered the study. Unless otherwise noted, all impacts discussed in the text are statistically significant at the 10 percent level or lower (see Appendix A for more detail).

Table 2.3
Impacts on Service Receipt at 12 Months

Outcome	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Education-related services</u>				
Ever participated (%)	75.0	57.4	17.5 ***	0.000
GED preparation	55.6	37.9	17.7 ***	0.000
Academic tutoring (not related to GED preparation)	18.1	7.6	10.5 ***	0.000
High school diploma prep courses	25.5	21.0	4.5 ***	0.007
Standardized Achievement Test preparation	25.0	13.3	11.8 ***	0.000
College-preparation activities ^a	31.0	11.6	19.4 ***	0.000
Getting help finding financial aid	30.9	14.1	16.7 ***	0.000
Other ^b	11.0	7.0	4.0 ***	0.001
Months participated	4.6	2.2	2.4 ***	0.000
<u>Job or training-related services</u>				
Ever participated (%)	70.8	39.4	31.4 ***	0.000
Job-skills training program	43.2	17.4	25.8 ***	0.000
On-the-job training in construction or another field	54.6	13.3	41.3 ***	0.000
Job certification program	31.1	8.2	22.9 ***	0.000
Job-search assistance ^c	54.2	29.3	24.9 ***	0.000
Help applying to a vocational training program ^d	35.1	13.0	22.1 ***	0.000
Months participated	4.4	1.4	2.9 ***	0.000
<u>Personal-development services</u>				
Ever participated (%)	59.3	31.3	28.0 ***	0.000
Help or advice from a mentor	38.5	17.1	21.5 ***	0.000
Life-skills training ^e	33.2	10.1	23.2 ***	0.000
Communication or public-speaking training	31.0	6.4	24.6 ***	0.000
Leadership-development training	41.4	8.7	32.6 ***	0.000
Health services	27.9	8.4	19.6 ***	0.000
Mental health services	18.5	6.0	12.5 ***	0.000
Working with a case manager	31.6	12.9	18.7 ***	0.000
Months participated	4.0	1.7	2.3 ***	0.000
Sample size (total = 2,845)	1,852	993		

(continued)

Table 2.3 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aIncludes college-awareness or college-guidance activities, college-preparation or -transition programs, and preparation for college entrance exams.

^bIncludes attending adult education classes, various certification courses, and college attendance.

^cIncludes activities such as help filling out an application, writing a résumé, and going for an interview.

^dIncludes help with a program application or interview.

^eIncludes activities such as parenting-skills classes and learning how to balance a checkbook.

people in the program and control group both reported receiving education-related services more often than services in the other two domains (75 percent of the program group and 57 percent of the control group reported receiving education-related services). The one-year period following study enrollment roughly reflects the time when many young people in the program group were enrolled in YouthBuild and receiving its services.

Within the education domain, General Educational Development (GED) test preparation was the most common activity (reported by 56 percent of the program group and 38 percent of the control group). These GED preparation participation rates are strikingly similar to those for a similar period in the ChalleNGe evaluation.¹¹ The program group reported participating in a wide range of activities, while the control group members' participation was less varied. Many young people did continue to work toward a high school diploma as well. On average, the program group reportedly spent more than four and a half months participating in education-related activities, while the control group spent about two months.¹²

The vast majority of the program group (76 percent of those who received services, not shown in the table) said that they participated in these services at YouthBuild. This finding is not surprising, since working toward a GED or a high school diploma is a central feature of the program. The YouthBuild model requires that academic services account for 50 to 60 percent of a YouthBuild participant's time. For the control group, the most common setting was a school (32 percent).

¹¹In the ChalleNGe evaluation, 9 months after study enrollment (a span that covers the 5.5-month ChalleNGe program period), 54 percent of the program group and 39 percent of the control group reported participating in GED preparation courses. See Bloom, Gardenhire-Crooks, and Mandsager (2009).

¹²For all the measures related to time spent on services in the three domains (discussed in this section and presented in Table 2.3), survey respondents were asked to report how much time they spent doing each individual activity within the domain. Since someone may have participated in many activities concurrently, Table 2.3 shows the averages of the longest times individuals reported for any activity within each domain.

Vocational training is another central component of the YouthBuild model. It is therefore unsurprising that members of the program group were significantly more likely to participate in job or training-related services than the control group (71 percent versus 39 percent). Again, the program group participated at high rates in a wide array of activities such as job-skills training and on-the-job training. The program group reported participating in these services for an average of three months longer than the control group. Seventy-eight percent of the program group members who received services reported receiving them at YouthBuild. The control group reported finding these services at community-based organizations, schools, employers, or elsewhere.

In both groups, respondents reported participating in the personal-development services domain the least frequently of the three. However, nearly 60 percent of the program group participated in these types of services, compared with only 31 percent of the control group. Unsurprisingly, given YouthBuild's focus on leadership, the largest difference between the program and control groups (33 percentage points) is in participation in leadership-development training. The program group also reported participating in each of the other activities more frequently than the control group. Seventy-eight percent of the program group members who received these services received them at a YouthBuild program. Most of those in the control group who participated in these services found them at community-based organizations and other types of organizations.

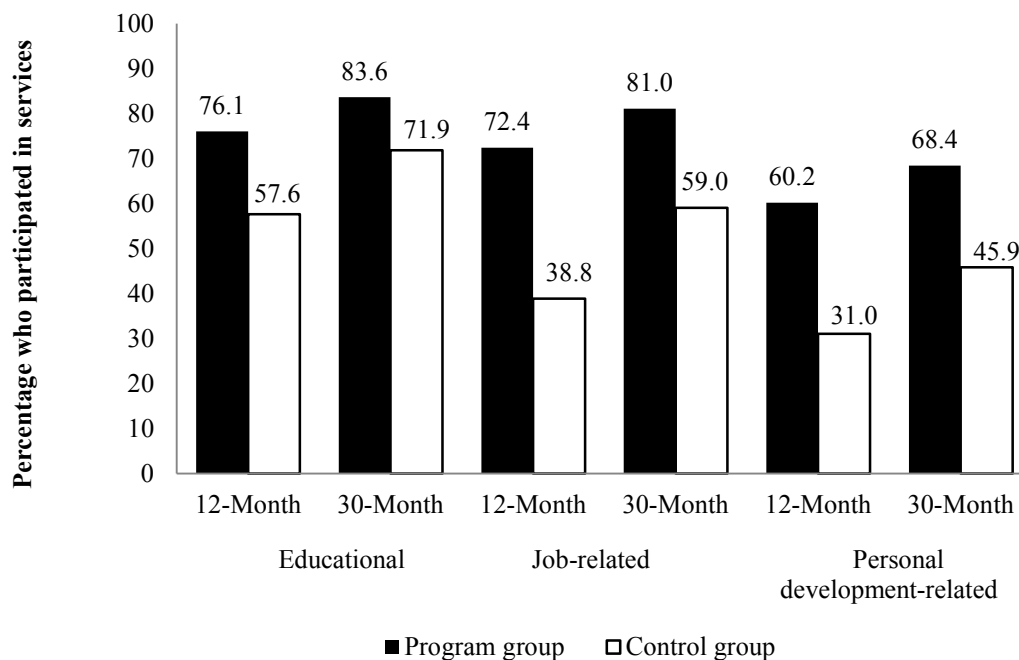
At 30 months, the pattern of differences between the program group and the control group is similar to the pattern at 12 months, although higher percentages of both the program group and the control group reported receiving services in each domain than was the case at 12 months, and the gaps between the program and control groups had narrowed. Figure 2.1 presents a comparison between the 12- and 30-month surveys among young people who were interviewed at both times. See Appendix Table C.2 for a fuller accounting of the 30-month survey results. At 30 months, around 84 percent of the program group reported having participated in education-related services (compared with 72 percent of the control group) and 81 percent had participated in job or training-related services (compared with 59 percent of the control group). As a comparison, in the Job Corps evaluation, 30 months after study enrollment 90 percent of program group members reported that they had enrolled in an education or training program at some time since random assignment, as did 64 percent of the control group.¹³

Overall, these results indicate that the YouthBuild group participated in services at higher rates than the control group, and participated in a wider variety of services. In addition,

¹³Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman (2000).

Figure 2.1

Services Received According to the 12-Month and 30-Month Surveys



SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month and 30-month surveys.

NOTE: Among those who responded to both surveys (sample size = 2,511).

the control group participated in services in multiple locations. This finding reinforces those of the process study: Alternative service providers in these communities rarely offered the same breadth and depth of services as a YouthBuild program. However, the screening done by YouthBuild programs led to a highly motivated sample, so it is not surprising that participation rates for the control group were high and increased over time.

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Chapter 3

Impacts Through 30 Months

As described in Chapter 2, young people in both the program group and the control group reported receiving a variety of services. However, young people in the program group participated in services at significantly higher rates in all three domains measured: education, training, and personal development. Receiving these services is hypothesized to lead to better outcomes related to each of these domains. This chapter presents YouthBuild’s effects on education, employment, and youth development, as well as its effects in other areas, such as housing and involvement in the criminal justice system.

As discussed in Chapter 1, data sources for these analyses include administrative records and the two follow-up surveys. Tables presented in this chapter reflect responses to the 30-month survey, when participating young people were 22 years old on average. See Appendix D for results from the 12-month survey. As also mentioned in Chapter 1, effects are occasionally discussed in terms of “impacts per participant” to account for the fact that not all young people assigned to the program group went on to participate in YouthBuild. Impacts per participant for selected outcomes are presented in Appendix Table D.10.

In sum, the program led to positive impacts on young people’s educational outcomes, particularly the rates at which they earned General Educational Development (GED) credentials and enrolled in vocational training and postsecondary education, as well as on some measures of employment and earnings.¹ There are few significant impacts on measures related to youth development and other outcome areas.

Impacts on Education

Educational services are essential components of the YouthBuild model: classes to help students complete their high school diplomas or GEDs; vocational services to prepare young people for careers; and services that help put students on a path to postsecondary education. As noted in Chapter 2, unless otherwise specified, only effects that are statistically significant at the 10 percent level or lower are discussed as program impacts. See Appendix A for more detail on the methods used to estimate program impacts.

¹The term “GED” is used throughout the report to indicate a high school equivalency credential, even though many states no longer use the official GED test to grant those credentials. The official GED test *was* still the predominant test used, however, in the locations where sample members resided during the follow-up period.

Table 3.1 presents impacts on education and vocational training. Participants' responses to the 30-month survey show that the program group was more likely than the control group to obtain a GED and receive vocational training or a trade license or certificate. Survey responses and enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse indicate that the program group was also more likely to enroll in postsecondary courses. At 30 months, 31 percent of the YouthBuild group had obtained a GED compared with only 18 percent of the control group, an impact of 14 percentage points.² The effect per participant is somewhat larger, at 19 percentage points. These findings are consistent with those reported in Chapter 2, showing that young people in the YouthBuild group were significantly more likely to receive GED preparation services than those in the control group.³ Although a number of programs did offer services to help young people earn high school diplomas, there was no significant difference between the program and control groups in the percentages who earned high school diplomas.

To provide two points of comparison, the impacts on GED receipt found here are similar in size to those found in Job Corps but smaller than those in National Guard Youth Challenge. After 30 months, 34 percent of the program group in the Job Corps evaluation and 17 percent of the control group had earned GEDs, rates similar to those presented here for YouthBuild.⁴ After nearly two years, almost half of the program group in the Challenge evaluation had earned a GED, compared with only 22 percent of the control group.⁵

The next two rows of Table 3.1 present data on enrollment in vocational training and the rate at which survey respondents earned trade licenses or certificates. Thirty-one percent of the YouthBuild group reported having enrolled in vocational training since they entered the study, compared with 20 percent of the control group, a statistically significant increase of 10 percentage points.⁶ Most of the increase in vocational training occurred during the program, although members of the YouthBuild group were also more likely to pursue training after they

²Data from the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) indicate that about 21 percent of adults ages 20 and older who dropped out of high school have GEDs. See Fry (2010).

³In early 2014, the official GED test was modified to make it better reflect the skills young people need to be successful in college and the workplace. In addition, several states stopped using the GED and chose to use different tests to assess high school equivalency. Many have argued that the new official GED test is more difficult to pass, and test-taking rates fell dramatically between 2013 and 2014 (see Mulhere, 2015). As noted in Chapter 1, however, given the timing of the evaluation, most study participants would have taken the official GED test to earn their high school equivalency credentials. Nonetheless, the change to the test may have affected a small number of YouthBuild participants who took equivalency tests after they left the program.

⁴These numbers are among those who did not have the credential when they enrolled in the Job Corps evaluation. See Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman (2000).

⁵Millenky, Bloom, and Dillon (2010).

⁶Due to rounding there may appear to be a slight discrepancy in the figures shown here.

Table 3.1
Impacts on Education and Training at 30 Months

Outcome (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Outcomes based on survey responses</u>				
Earned a high school diploma or GED	49.3	36.7	12.6***	0.000
High school diploma	18.1	19.2	-1.1	0.413
GED	31.2	17.5	13.7***	0.000
Enrolled in high school or GED classes	65.3	59.3	6.0***	0.002
Enrolled in vocational school ^a	30.8	20.4	10.3***	0.000
Received a trade license/training certificate ^b	4.1	2.1	2.0**	0.019
Enrolled in postsecondary courses	23.6	18.1	5.6***	0.001
4-year college or university	4.5	2.2	2.3***	0.005
2-year or community college	22.0	17.1	4.8***	0.004
Received a postsecondary degree	1.1	1.0	0.2	0.680
Associate's degree	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.300
Bachelor's degree	0.1	0.1	-0.1	0.533
Other degree	0.3	0.5	-0.3	0.254
Sample size (total = 2,808)	1,830	978		
<u>Outcomes based on enrollment data</u>				
Attended college				
Enrolled in a 4-year institution	3.0	2.4	0.6	0.304
Enrolled in a 2-year institution	15.1	8.0	7.1***	0.000
Enrolled in a less-than-2-year institution	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.302
Public	15.5	8.0	7.5***	0.000
Private	2.7	2.4	0.3	0.572
Full time	7.6	4.9	2.7***	0.001
Part time	10.1	3.9	6.2***	0.000
Received a degree	1.4	0.6	0.8**	0.032
Certificate	1.1	0.4	0.7**	0.031
Associate's	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.117
Bachelor's	0.1	0.2	-0.1	0.457
Master's	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.600
Sample size (total = 3,929)	2,700	1,229		

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse and responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

All outcomes reflect activity since random assignment unless otherwise noted.

^a"Vocational school" includes technical, business, and trade schools.

^b"Trade license/training certificate" includes technical, business, and trade certificates.

left the program (based on analyses not shown). National data suggest that about 9 percent of GED recipients between the ages of 16 and 24 enroll in vocational or technical programs.⁷ Both study groups are enrolling in these kinds of programs at a high rate, reinforcing the idea that the evaluation sample is a motivated group of young people. While few young people received trade licenses or training certificates (fewer than 5 percent of both groups), there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with the program group about 2 percentage points more likely to complete a license or trade certificate. Note that the percentage of young people participating in vocational training reported here is somewhat lower than the reports of service receipt in general, presented through Month 12 in Chapter 2 and through Month 30 in Appendix Table C.2. This discrepancy most likely reflects the fact that the survey question used for the analysis in this chapter asked respondents about formal enrollment in vocational, technical, business, or trade school, not about participation in vocational training in general, which could include the training provided by YouthBuild itself.

The next set of rows in the table presents effects on postsecondary enrollment. Given the positive effects on GED completion and many YouthBuild programs' growing emphasis on postsecondary preparation, it is reasonable to expect effects on postsecondary enrollment. About 24 percent of young people in the program group reported having enrolled in postsecondary classes since random assignment, nearly 6 percentage points more than the control group. The effect per participant is somewhat larger, at 8 percentage points (see Appendix Table D.10). The survey data show that the YouthBuild group was more likely to report having enrolled in courses at both four-year and two-year colleges, although few members of either the program or the control group reported enrolling at four-year institutions. About 5 percent of the program group enrolled in a four-year college, compared with 2 percent of the control group. Enrollment rates for both groups are much higher at two-year colleges, and are 5 percentage points higher for the program group than they are for the control group.

⁷Zhang (2010).

Education outcomes are also reported using data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), which captures students' enrollment at most postsecondary institutions in the United States, although its coverage is notably lower for for-profit institutions such as many technical schools.⁸ Like the survey data, NSC data also show an increase in postsecondary enrollment, but the impact is only statistically significant for enrollment at two-year institutions. Fifteen percent of the YouthBuild group was enrolled at some point in a two-year program compared with 8 percent of the control group, an increase of 7 percentage points. The NSC data match the survey data in showing no effect on the rate at which young people earned associate's degrees or higher degrees, but a small increase in the rate at which they earned certificates. The low rate of degree receipt is not surprising, since few young people would have had time to earn degrees during the 30-month follow-up period.

To provide a point of comparison for these effects on postsecondary education, the effect on certificate receipt is small compared with the effect found in the Job Corps evaluation. That program led to an increase in the receipt of vocational, technical, or trade certificates of 20 percentage points, although it had no effect on the receipt of college degrees.⁹ Challenge, on the other hand, had no effect on certificate receipt (although vocational training was not part of its core services), but did lead to small increases in postsecondary enrollment.¹⁰

Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth indicate that by the age of 22, about 8 percent of GED recipients have enrolled in two-year colleges and 2 percent have enrolled in four-year colleges.¹¹ These figures are comparable to the control group's enrollment rates in this evaluation as measured using NSC data. The survey data show a somewhat higher rate of enrollment in two-year colleges, at 17 percent.

These findings are encouraging given that YouthBuild has only recently begun to focus on postsecondary preparation. They are also encouraging given that the young people in this study (in both the program and control groups) appear to have been highly motivated to seek out and participate in services on their own. Although by the time of the 30-month survey few participants would have had time to complete a degree (and few of them did earn degrees), there is evidence to suggest that people who enroll in community college see higher earnings over

⁸GED recipients are more likely to enroll at for-profit colleges than students with traditional high school diplomas. Because so many members of the study sample are GED recipients, the NSC data may underrepresent the rates at which the program and control groups enrolled in college. See Dynarski, Hemelt, and Hyman (2015).

⁹Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman (2000).

¹⁰Millenky, Bloom, and Dillon (2010).

¹¹Calculations are based on the cross-sectional subsample of the survey, which is drawn to be representative of the full population. See Heckman, Humphries, and Mader (2010).

time whether or not they ever earn degrees.¹² Further, some research suggests that additional years of schooling can improve health outcomes and reduce the rate at which people receive welfare benefits.¹³ The final report from this evaluation will explore student persistence over a longer period.

Impacts on Employment and Earnings

The opportunities for education and training in YouthBuild should help participating young people to find jobs after completing the program. While few young people in the program group reported receiving trade licenses or certificates, Chapter 2 showed that their participation in training programs was relatively high. Table 3.2 presents YouthBuild's effects on employment and earnings 30 months after study enrollment. (See Appendix D for 12-month impacts.) As Chapter 1 noted, this follow-up period ranges from 2012 through mid-2015, when youth unemployment rates were still quite high. As one recent paper notes, youth unemployment is more sensitive to the economic context than adult employment.¹⁴

While sample members were still quite young at the time of the survey (age 22, on average) and some had enrolled in college, nearly 80 percent of the study sample reported having been employed at some point over the 30-month follow-up period, and just over 40 percent were employed at the time of the survey. Nearly a quarter reported full-time employment of 35 hours or more a week, across one or more jobs. Although the program did not increase employment rates, the program group was significantly more likely than the control group to be earning \$10 or more per hour (18 percent of the program group reported earnings at that level compared with 14 percent of the control group, for an impact of 3 percentage points).¹⁵ Consistent with this difference, the program also led to an increase in weekly earnings of \$15.70. This difference in earnings is similar to the impact found in the Job Corps evaluation at the same 30-month follow-up point. Rates of employment for both the program and control groups were higher in Job Corps by about 10 percentage points.¹⁶ The lower employment rates for the YouthBuild sample may be due in part to the weak youth labor market in the years following the Great Recession, as discussed in Chapter 1.

¹²Marcotte, Bailey, Borkoski, and Kienzl (2005).

¹³Belfield and Bailey (2011).

¹⁴Hossain and Bloom (2015).

¹⁵All wage and earnings averages include zeros for sample members who were not employed at the time of the survey.

¹⁶Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman (2000).

Table 3.2
Impacts on Employment and Earnings at 30 Months

Outcome	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Outcomes based on survey responses</u>				
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	80.2	77.8	2.4	0.145
Currently employed (%)	44.3	41.9	2.4	0.245
Working full time (35+ hours/week)	25.1	24.7	0.4	0.820
Self-employed	11.1	9.4	1.7	0.188
Working through a temp agency	7.1	6.0	1.1	0.308
Earning \$10/hour or more	17.5	14.2	3.3**	0.030
Average weekly earnings (\$)	150.2	134.5	15.7*	0.081
Current job industry (%)				
Construction	4.2	2.8	1.4*	0.075
Retail trade	6.3	6.0	0.3	0.741
Admin./support/waste mgmt./remediation	5.6	6.3	-0.7	0.484
Health care and social assistance	4.6	4.0	0.6	0.474
Accommodation and food service	10.5	10.9	-0.3	0.803
Other	12.3	11.2	1.1	0.422
Sample size (total = 2,808)	1,830	978		
<u>Outcomes based on unemployment insurance data</u>				
Ever employed (%)				
Employed in Year 1	48.9	51.3	-2.4	0.120
Employed in Year 2	62.9	59.7	3.2**	0.049
Employed in Quarter 10	44.4	44.8	-0.4	0.816
Total earnings (\$)				
Earnings in Year 1	2,093.4	2,407.7	-314.3**	0.016
Earnings in Year 2	3,735.2	3,936.7	-201.5	0.293
Earnings in Quarter 10	1,280.8	1,277.0	3.9	0.962
Sample size (total = 3,877)	2,662	1,215		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using data from the National Directory of New Hires and responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Social Security numbers were not available for some sample members, who therefore could not be matched to the unemployment insurance database.

About 10 percent of the sample reported being self-employed (or just over 20 percent of those currently working). A separate analysis (not shown) indicates that the main difference in job types between the self-employed and other workers was that those reporting self-employment were more likely to work in construction-related jobs.

The next set of rows in Table 3.2 presents the industry reported by sample members for their current jobs. Young people were most commonly employed in the accommodation and food service industry, a sector of the U.S. economy that employs many low-skilled workers. Rates of employment in the construction industry were quite low, especially when one considers YouthBuild's focus on construction. As discussed earlier, these low employment rates in construction could be linked to the fact that many of these young people lived in communities where construction had not rebounded from the recession. However, the program group was still more likely to be working in that field than the control group.

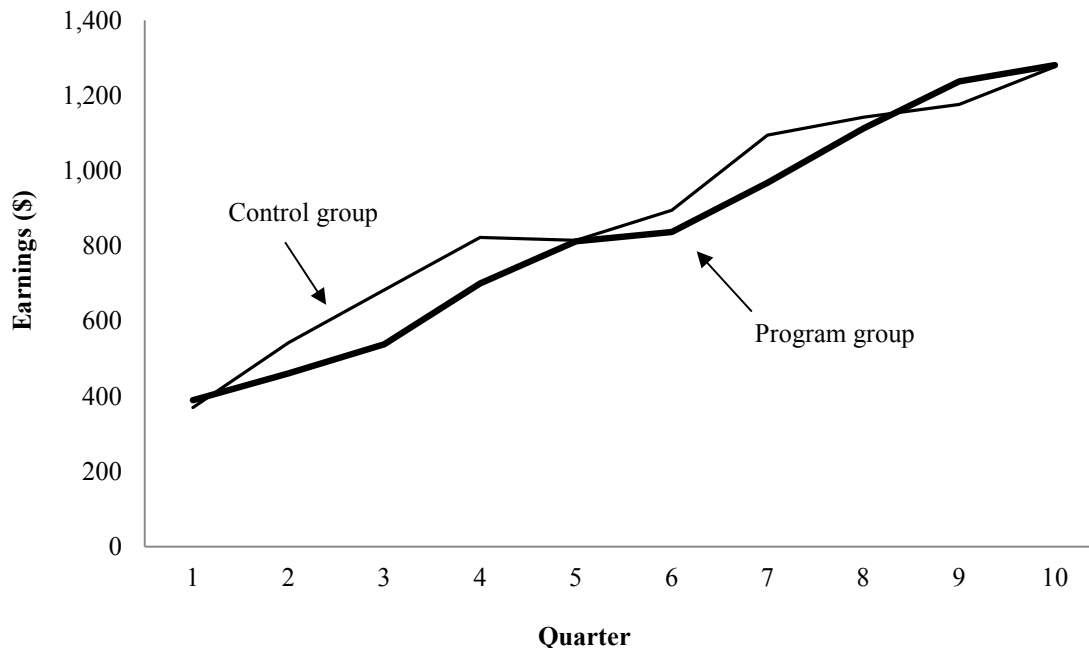
Combining the survey responses with the administrative data, shown on the bottom of Table 3.2 and in Figure 3.1, a pattern emerges related to program involvement: During the first year after study enrollment, when the program group was engaged in YouthBuild, the control group was more likely to be employed and earned more than the program group. After the program group left YouthBuild and perhaps obtained a GED or received other forms of training, the program group's employment increased and they were more likely to be employed than the control group. The administrative data show that the program group was more likely than the control group to be employed (63 percent versus 60 percent) in the second year of the follow-up period. Figure 3.1 illustrates the trend in earnings, with the control group earning significantly more in the first year, but the difference decreasing in the second follow-up year and the program group starting to earn more toward the end of the follow-up period (Quarter 9). This trend matches well with the survey data discussed above regarding current earnings and wages at the two-and-a-half-year mark.

Impacts on Youth Development

YouthBuild has been a leader in integrating youth development into its programs by promoting leadership and community service. These kinds of activities are intended to keep young people on a positive trajectory and increase their civic engagement. Several measures of youth development and civic engagement were obtained from the surveys.

Table 3.3 presents the results. At 30 months, the program group was significantly more likely than the control group to report that they had volunteered or been involved in politics or local community activities. Fifty-four percent of the program group reported volunteering,

Figure 3.1
Earnings by Quarter



SOURCE: MDRC calculations using data from the National Database of New Hires.

NOTES: The earnings impacts are statistically significant at the 5 percent level in Quarters 2 and 4. The earnings impacts are statistically significant at the 1 percent level in Quarter 3 and at the 10 percent level in Quarter 7.

Quarter 1 refers to the quarter of random assignment. This figure includes only employment and earnings in jobs covered by the unemployment insurance system. It does not include jobs not covered by the unemployment insurance system (for example, "off-the-books" jobs).

compared with only 31 percent of the control group. Fifteen percent of the program group was involved in politics or local community activities, compared with 12 percent of the control group. Notably, both the program group and the control group volunteered at higher rates than the national average. Current Population Survey data from September 2012 indicate that only 23 percent of those between the ages of 16 and 24 volunteer.¹⁷

¹⁷U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013).

Table 3.3
Impacts on Youth Development at 30 Months

Outcome	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Civic engagement since random assignment (%)	92.2	88.6	3.6***	0.002
Volunteered	54.4	30.9	23.6***	0.000
Registered to vote ^a	84.8	84.7	0.1	0.965
Voted	46.4	43.9	2.4	0.205
Involved in politics or local community activities	15.3	12.0	3.3**	0.026
Currently happy (%)	80.2	79.9	0.4	0.832
What the future holds (%)				
Willing to wait for bigger financial rewards ^b	32.8	36.8	-4.0**	0.047
Will probably attend college ^c	74.3	72.4	1.9	
Expects to live at least 70 years	82.0	79.9	2.1	0.222
Exhibits signs of major depression ^d (%)	16.7	18.3	-1.6	0.325
Overall good health (%)	82.5	82.7	-0.3	0.872
Believes most people can be trusted (%)	22.5	20.9	1.6	0.364
Social support score ^e	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.421
Self-esteem score ^f	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.545
Self-confidence score ^g	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.954
Sample size (total = 2,808)	1,830	978		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aCurrently registered to vote at the time of the survey.

^bBased on responses to the question, "Would you rather get \$80 tomorrow or get \$100 three months from now?"

^cAmong those who have not attended and are not currently attending college. This measure is nonexperimental, so significance level and P-Value are not included.

^dDepression is measured using the PHQ-9, a nine-item scale used to diagnose depression in clinical settings. Response categories range from 0 = "not at all" to 3 = "nearly every day," where higher scores indicate more frequent occurrence of depression symptoms. If the item score sum is greater than or equal to 10, the respondent is considered to exhibit signs of major depression.

^eSocial support is measured using a six-item scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate stronger social support. The six items are averaged.

^fSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. The 10 items are averaged.

^gSelf-confidence is measured using a six-item scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-confidence. The six items are averaged.

The program had few other significant impacts related to youth development. The follow-up surveys asked a number of questions designed to capture aspects of development such as self-esteem, self-confidence, depression and happiness, and orientation toward the future. The program had no consistent or lasting effects on these measures. ChalleNGe, another program focused on promoting youth development, similarly had no effect on these types of outcome measures.¹⁸ Other research suggests that it is difficult to create lasting changes in many of these attitudinal measures.¹⁹

Impacts on Other Outcomes

The YouthBuild program model is designed to foster young people's successful transition into adulthood, above and beyond their education and employment outcomes. To assess program impacts on outcomes in other important areas, the surveys asked respondents about their current living situations, family structures, substance use, and delinquency. Unless otherwise noted, the measures reported here are taken from the 30-month follow-up survey and either represent the status of respondents at that time or since the time of random assignment. (Data from the 12-month survey are presented in Appendix D.)

Tables 3.4 and 3.5 present the results. Among the most notable outcomes in these tables, young people in the program group were significantly more likely than control group members to report living on their own at the time of the survey, more likely to report living with their children (among those who had children), and less likely to report living in households that received government benefits.

At the time of the 30-month survey, about half of the young people in both the program and control groups were living with their parents, and about 25 percent reported having been homeless at some point since random assignment. Young people in the program group were more likely to report that they lived on their own (30 percent compared with 26 percent of the control group), which seems to be mostly due to a reduction in living with parents. Perhaps as a result of this move, fewer young people in the program group were living in households whose members received government benefits (roughly 63 percent of the program group compared with 67 percent of the control group).

The next several rows of Table 3.4 present data on parenthood status. Half of the study participants reported having children, up from 30 percent when they entered the study. Although the program did not affect the number of participants who had children, young people in

¹⁸Millenky, Bloom, and Dillon (2010).

¹⁹Eccles and Gootman (2002).

Table 3.4**Impacts on Living Arrangements and Household Information at 30 Months**

Outcome (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Current living arrangement				
Parent's home	45.8	48.7	-2.8	0.152
Another person's home ^a	18.8	18.3	0.5	0.779
One's own place	29.6	26.2	3.4*	0.062
Incarceration facility	1.9	1.6	0.4	0.519
Other arrangement ^b	3.9	5.2	-1.3	0.115
Ever homeless since random assignment	23.9	25.9	-2.0	0.252
Married or living with spouse/partner	26.1	26.7	-0.6	0.737
Receiving government benefits ^c	62.6	66.6	-4.0**	0.041
Has children ^d	51.3	49.1	2.2	0.187
Young parent ^e	1.7	2.3	-0.6	0.266
Lives with all or some of one's children	37.4	33.8	3.6**	0.033
Has children but not custody	18.2	18.5	-0.3	0.828
Paid child support in the last 30 days	3.7	2.9	0.8	0.268
Sample size (total = 2,808)	1,830	978		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aIncludes living with family other than parents.

^bIncludes living in a group home or halfway house, a long-term homeless shelter, or an emergency housing shelter (including for domestic violence); living on the street; situations such as college or residential training programs; and other situations.

^cGovernment benefits include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps); unemployment insurance; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; Supplemental Security Income; foster care payments; and utility-payment assistance.

^dIncludes a person's biological, adopted, foster, and stepchildren, plus any other children he or she is responsible for.

^e"Young parent" is defined here as a person under the age of 20 who is pregnant or who has a child.

Table 3.5
Impacts on Delinquency and Risky Behavior at 30 Months

Outcome (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Arrested	27.6	26.4	1.3	0.482
Charged	24.8	23.7	1.1	0.526
Convicted or found delinquent ^a	15.7	14.1	1.6	0.278
Drug offense	4.8	4.3	0.5	0.543
Driving under the influence	1.3	1.2	0.1	0.897
Failure to pay child support	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.568
Property offense ^b	5.2	4.7	0.4	0.656
Violent offense ^c	3.7	2.7	1.0	0.186
Other	2.5	1.3	1.3 **	0.037
Locked up due to a sentence	8.9	7.3	1.6	0.176
Involved in a gang fight in the past 12 months	5.6	6.7	-1.0	0.297
Substance abuse				
Has 5+ drinks once or more in a typical week	31.7	26.1	5.6 ***	0.004
Has used marijuana since random assignment	45.8	48.2	-2.5	0.229
Has used another drug since random assignment	13.4	9.7	3.6 ***	0.009
Drove a car while drinking or doing drugs in the last 30 days	6.0	4.5	1.5	0.118
Sample size (total = 2,808)	1,830	978		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

All outcomes reflect activity since random assignment unless otherwise noted.

^aIn the juvenile justice system, the term "adjudicated delinquent" is used rather than "convicted."

^bProperty offenses include shoplifting, burglary, larceny, theft, auto theft, writing bad checks, fraud, forgery, arson, vandalism, and possession of stolen goods.

^cViolent offenses include physical or sexual assault, rape, robbery, manslaughter, attempted murder, and murder.

the program group were somewhat more likely than those in the control group to report that they lived with all or some of their children (37 percent compared with 34 percent). This difference does not appear to be caused by a reduction in the number of noncustodial parents, since there is no effect on that outcome.

The survey also asked questions about delinquency and about risky behaviors such as substance use. The first few rows of Table 3.5 present effects on involvement in the criminal justice system. About 27 percent of the young people in the study reported having been arrested since random assignment, and 15 percent had been convicted. Most of these convictions were for drug or property offenses, which is in line with national data on common offense types for young adults.²⁰ The program had no effect on these outcomes. Rates of arrests reported by the YouthBuild sample are similar to those found in the Job Corps evaluation. In that study, 27 percent of young people in the control group reported having been arrested in the 30 months after they entered the study. Job Corps led to a reduction in that rate of 4 percentage points.²¹

The bottom panel of Table 3.5 shows rates of substance use. At the time of the 30-month survey, young people in the program group were more likely than those in the control group to report periods of heavy alcohol use (32 percent versus 26 percent, for an impact of 6 percentage points). Although it is not clear what led to this finding, it is cause for concern, and a future report will assess whether it persists over time. (There was no effect on this outcome at 12 months.) In contrast, there was no significant difference between the program and control groups in the use of marijuana (roughly 47 percent of respondents had used marijuana at least once). As a point of comparison, in a national survey about 20 percent of young adults reported using marijuana in the previous month.²² The rate reported by the study sample is expected to be higher because it covers a 30-month period. Finally, program group members were significantly more likely than control group members to report having used drugs other than marijuana (13 percent compared with 10 percent).

²⁰Sickmund and Puzzanchera (2014).

²¹Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman (2000).

²²U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2014).

Chapter 4

Impacts on Subgroups

Although the young people who enrolled in the study are all disadvantaged and share many common challenges, they do differ in many ways. Some study participants were in their 20s when they entered the study, while others were still teenagers. Some nearly finished high school before dropping out, while others left school in the ninth or tenth grade. Still others are parents of young children. YouthBuild might have different effects on the different types of young people it serves. As the process study noted, for example, many staff members believe that older participants were more ready to take advantage of the program. This chapter presents effects for a limited number of preselected subgroups of young people.

The process study also found that although most programs had high fidelity to the YouthBuild model, there was some variation among them, particularly in the youth-development component. This chapter assesses how program impacts vary based on overall program fidelity. (The programs in the study also vary in many other ways, such as the length of Mental Toughness Orientation, the strength of their connections to colleges, and their emphasis on youth leadership. A formal analysis of how YouthBuild's effects vary across some of these program dimensions will be presented in the final report.)

Selection of Subgroups

The subgroups based on young people's characteristics were defined by age, sex, and education level. The selection of subgroups was informed by underlying theory or previous evidence about how certain characteristics might affect how young people interact with or benefit from the program. Age, for example, was an important dimension because staff members observed that older participants tend to be more ready for the program. In addition, the Job Corps evaluation found that the program's effects on earnings persisted longer for those who were older when they entered the study.¹ On the other hand, older participants would have been out of school longer and may have found it more challenging to engage in an education program. "Younger" participants were defined as those who were under age 20 when they entered the study, while "older" participants were defined as those 20 and older.

¹Schochet, Burghardt, and McConnell (2008).

The program might also have different effects on men and women. The challenges facing young black and Latino men have been well documented and are evidenced by their high dropout rates and unemployment rates.² In this sense, young men stand to benefit the most from a program like YouthBuild and might see bigger effects than young women. On the other hand, the challenges they face may limit their ability to take advantage of the program. Other evaluations of youth programs have found that they have different effects on young men and women.³

The final subgroup is defined by education level, or the highest grade a young person completed before leaving high school. As discussed in the process report, staff members noted that many young people entered the study with middle school reading and math levels, and a number of programs use assessments of basic skills to screen out very low-skilled candidates. On the one hand, young people with more education may be in a better position to take advantage of YouthBuild's services, passing the General Educational Development (GED) exam and benefiting from vocational training.⁴ On the other hand, young people with more education might have done fairly well even in the absence of YouthBuild (especially since this appears to have been a motivated sample of young people), so there might not be much difference between the program and control groups' outcomes. The "less educated" subgroup of participants are those who left school before completing the tenth grade, while the "more educated" subgroup are those who completed the tenth grade or more. Note that the "more educated" subgroup includes the 9 percent of sample members who had high school diplomas or GEDs when they entered the study.

The final subgroup is based on a program characteristic: fidelity to the YouthBuild model. The process study documented that most programs had high fidelity to the model. The average fidelity score was 79 out of 100. Overall fidelity was based on scores for each of the following components: educational services, vocational training, supportive services, program operations, youth leadership, and postsecondary preparation. Average fidelity scores were highest for education and vocational training and somewhat lower for youth leadership and postsecondary preparation. The general score is used here to provide an initial look at how impacts vary with the overall strength of the program. Since the average fidelity score was 79 for study programs, high-fidelity programs were defined here as those achieving overall scores of 80 or higher. About half of the programs are above this cutoff.

The analysis is conducted by estimating impacts separately for each of the two subgroups in a pair and then assessing the differences in effects. In general, impacts are expected to

²U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2014); U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016d).

³See, for example, Miller et al. (2005).

⁴As noted earlier, the term "GED" is used throughout this report to indicate a high school equivalency credential, even though many states no longer use the official GED test to grant those credentials.

vary to some extent between subgroups, simply as a result of natural variation around the average impact for the full sample. The analysis assesses whether that variation in impacts across subgroups is statistically significant, or beyond what would be expected to occur by chance alone. For that reason, the important question is not whether a given impact for, say, the younger subgroup is statistically different from zero, but whether that impact is statistically different from the impact for the older subgroup (indicated by daggers in the rightmost column of the tables). If the difference between these two subgroup impacts is not statistically significant, the results suggest that the effects observed for the full sample generally hold across both groups being compared.

Subgroup Impacts

Table 4.1 presents YouthBuild’s effects on the younger and older subgroups of participants. Both groups have similar rates of participation in YouthBuild, although the older group is somewhat more likely to have graduated from the program. The only difference in impacts between the groups is a large increase in GED receipt for the older group. The program increased GED receipt by 17 percentage points for the older group, compared with 11 percentage points for the younger group. The relatively large increase in GED receipt for the older group is encouraging. Older participants may find it more difficult to reengage in education, since they have been out of school for a longer time — as reflected in the responses of the control group, which show lower rates of participation in education and GED receipt for the older subgroup.

Table 4.2 presents the program’s effects on women and men. Women and men were equally likely to graduate from YouthBuild. In fact, overall, the program had similar effects on men and women. One important difference between women and men does not relate to program effects, but to the general outcomes of both groups: Women had much lower rates of involvement with the criminal justice system. About 15 percent of women in the control group reported having been arrested since they entered the study, compared with 34 percent of men.

Table 4.3 presents YouthBuild’s effects on the more and less educated subgroups. The more educated group is more likely to have graduated from the program, although YouthBuild’s impacts on service receipt and GED receipt are very similar for both groups. The more educated control group was less likely to have earned a GED in the time since they entered the study (probably because more of them already had GEDs or diplomas when they entered), but much more likely to have enrolled in postsecondary education.

The only difference in effects across the two groups is for work. The program led to an increase of 6 percentage points in work as reported on the survey for the less educated subgroup, an effect that is significantly different from the effect on the more educated subgroup. The effects on work found using unemployment insurance data are also significantly different

between the two subgroups, although that difference is due in part to a negative effect on employment for the more educated group. It will be important to track longer-term effects for both of these groups.

Table 4.4 presents the effects of higher-fidelity and lower-fidelity programs. Effects on service receipt are larger for young people in the higher-fidelity programs. For example, the higher-fidelity programs increased participation in job- or training-related services by 26 percentage points, compared with 14 percentage points for the lower-fidelity programs. These impacts on service receipt seem to have arisen in part because program group members at higher-fidelity programs engaged in services at higher rates, but also because the control groups at these programs engaged in services at lower rates. Other differences between the control groups similarly suggest that the higher-fidelity programs may have served more highly disadvantaged young people. For example, the control group for the higher-fidelity programs is less likely than the other control group to have earned GEDs, and less likely to have attended college. In the final report, the analysis of how effects vary among programs will account for differences in the types of young people they serve. In any case, the results shown here indicate that the programs that had higher fidelity to the YouthBuild model did not have larger effects.

Table 4.1
Impacts by Age at 30 Months

Outcome	Sample Members Under 20				Sample Members 20 and Older				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Ever participated in YouthBuild (%)	80.0	NA	NA		79.9	NA	NA		
Graduated from YouthBuild (%)	65.6	NA	NA		70.5	NA	NA		
Service receipt (%)									
Education-related	82.4	72.1	10.3***	0.000	79.9	67.4	12.5***	0.000	
Job- or training-related	78.3	59.2	19.1***	0.000	78.3	56.2	22.1***	0.000	
Personal development	65.0	44.5	20.5***	0.000	66.2	44.2	22.0***	0.000	
Education (%)									
Earned a GED since random assignment	30.5	19.8	10.7***	0.000	32.2	15.2	17.0***	0.000	†
Enrolled in college since random assignment (2- or 4-year)	22.7	18.4	4.3*	0.081	24.6	17.8	6.8***	0.005	
Youth development									
Civic engagement ^a (%)	90.9	87.4	3.5**	0.050	93.5	89.7	3.8**	0.012	
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.3	3.2	0.1*	0.071	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.704	
Work									
Currently employed (%)	43.2	40.6	2.6	0.384	45.1	43.5	1.6	0.584	
Earnings greater than \$10 per hour (%)	16.5	12.5	4.0*	0.064	18.7	15.5	3.2	0.153	
Ever employed in Quarter 10 ^c (%)	44.0	42.0	2.0	0.411	44.9	47.6	-2.7	0.249	

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Outcome	Sample Members Under 20				Sample Members 20 and Older				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Work									
Average earnings in Quarter 10 ^c (\$)	1,266	1,197	68.3	0.537	1,301	1,343	-41.7	0.700	
Involvement in the criminal justice system									
Arrested since random assignment (%)	28.9	28.9	0.0	0.994	26.0	24.5	1.5	0.555	
Sample size	950	467			879	510			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using data from the National Directory of New Hires and responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The H-statistic is used to assess whether the difference between subgroup impacts is statistically significant. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are indicated as: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

NA = not applicable.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, and being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

^cThese outcomes are based on unemployment insurance data, not survey responses. The sample sizes for the younger program and control subgroups are 1,414 and 583 respectively. The sample sizes for the older program and control subgroups are 1,248 and 633 respectively.

Table 4.2
Impacts by Gender at 30 Months

Outcome	Women				Men				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Ever participated in YouthBuild (%)	78.9	NA	NA		80.6	NA	NA		
Graduated from YouthBuild (%)	67.6	NA	NA		68.2	NA	NA		
Service receipt (%)									
Education-related	82.3	74.1	8.2***	0.003	80.6	67.0	13.6***	0.000	
Job- or training-related	76.5	56.5	19.9***	0.000	79.5	58.4	21.1***	0.000	
Personal development	67.6	47.1	20.5***	0.000	64.5	42.3	22.2***	0.000	
Education (%)									
Earned a GED since random assignment	26.6	16.4	10.2***	0.000	33.9	18.4	15.5***	0.000	
Enrolled in college since random assignment (2- or 4- year)	24.3	20.6	3.7	0.215	22.7	17.4	5.4**	0.012	
Youth development									
Civic engagement ^a (%)	93.2	88.4	4.8***	0.010	91.6	88.7	2.8*	0.062	
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.2	3.3	0.0	0.763	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.201	
Work									
Currently employed (%)	39.8	38.3	1.4	0.675	47.4	43.7	3.6	0.168	
Earnings greater than \$10 per hour (%)	12.0	7.7	4.4**	0.044	21.5	17.4	4.1*	0.060	
Ever employed in Quarter 10 ^c (%)	45.2	43.9	1.3	0.660	44.1	45.4	-1.3	0.551	

(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

Outcome	Women				Men				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Work									
Average earnings in Quarter 10 ^c (\$)	1,100	1,026	73.4	0.483	1,383	1,418	-35.2	0.756	
Involvement in the criminal justice system									
Arrested since random assignment (%)	16.5	14.8	1.7	0.509	34.2	34.5	-0.3522	0.89	
Sample size	697	366			1,127	608			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using data from the National Directory of New Hires and responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The H-statistic is used to assess whether the difference between the subgroup impacts is statistically significant. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are indicated as: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

NA = not applicable.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, and being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

^cThese outcomes are based on unemployment insurance data, not survey responses. The sample sizes for the female program and control subgroups are 955 and 424 respectively. The sample sizes for the male program and control subgroups are 1,703 and 789 respectively.

Table 4.3
Impacts by Highest Grade Previously Completed, at 30 Months

Outcome	Sample Members Who Had Completed Less Than Tenth Grade				Sample Members Who Had Completed Tenth Grade or Higher				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Ever participated in YouthBuild (%)	80.7	NA	NA		79.1	NA	NA		
Graduated from YouthBuild (%)	65.0	NA	NA		71.5	NA	NA		
Service receipt (%)									
Education-related	83.4	71.0	12.4***	0.000	79.7	68.7	11.0***	0.000	
Job- or training-related	79.5	56.9	22.6***	0.000	76.8	58.5	18.3***	0.000	
Personal development	68.0	45.0	23.0***	0.000	62.9	43.6	19.3***	0.000	
Education (%)									
Earned a GED since random assignment	32.3	18.2	14.1***	0.000	29.8	15.1	14.7***	0.000	
Enrolled in college since random assignment (2- or 4- year)	20.8	13.9	6.9***	0.002	27.0	22.6	4.4	0.106	
Youth development									
Civic engagement ^a (%)	91.1	86.9	4.2**	0.012	93.4	90.7	2.7*	0.096	
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.634	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.436	
Work									
Currently employed (%)	44.2	37.9	6.3**	0.028	44.0	46.7	-2.7	0.380	††
Earnings greater than \$10 per hour (%)	16.6	12.2	4.4**	0.032	18.3	16.9	1.3	0.583	
Ever employed in Quarter 10 ^c (%)	43.3	40.3	3.0	0.190	45.7	50.2	-4.6*	0.071	††

(continued)

Table 4.3 (continued)

Outcome	Sample Members Who Had Completed Less Than Tenth Grade				Sample Members Who Had Completed Tenth Grade or Higher				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Work									
Average earnings in Quarter 10 ^c (\$)	1,190	1,094	96.1	0.295	1,399	1,494	-95.7	0.493	
Involvement in the criminal justice system									
Arrested since random assignment (%)	29.5	27.4	2.1	0.412	25.1	26.0	-0.9	0.738	
Sample size	1,004	515			797	450			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using data from the National Directory of New Hires and responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The H-statistic is used to assess whether the difference between the subgroup impacts is statistically significant. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are indicated as: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

NA = not applicable.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, and being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

^cThese outcomes are based on unemployment insurance data, not survey responses. The sample sizes for program and control subgroup members who had completed less than tenth grade are 1,445 and 631 respectively. The sample sizes for program and control subgroup members who had completed tenth grade or higher are 1,177 and 571 respectively.

Table 4.4

Impacts by Program Fidelity, at 30 Months

Outcome	Sample Members from Programs with Low Fidelity				Sample Members from Programs with High Fidelity				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Ever participated in YouthBuild (%)	75.7	NA	NA		82.7	NA	NA		
Graduated from YouthBuild (%)	69.0	NA	NA		67.3	NA	NA		
Service receipt (%)									
Education-related	80.2	72.3	7.9 ***	0.003	81.9	67.7	14.2 ***	0.000	†
Job- or training-related	75.9	62.4	13.5 ***	0.000	79.8	54.1	25.8 ***	0.000	†††
Personal development	63.0	46.0	17.0 ***	0.000	67.3	42.9	24.4 ***	0.000	†
Education (%)									
Earned a GED since random assignment	33.8	19.1	14.7 ***	0.000	29.4	16.8	12.6 ***	0.000	
Enrolled in college since random assignment (2- or 4- year)	27.4	21.0	6.3 **	0.022	21.1	16.3	4.8 **	0.026	
Youth development									
Civic engagement ^a (%)	93.2	90.3	2.8 *	0.095	91.5	87.3	4.3 ***	0.006	
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.855	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.590	
Work									
Currently employed (%)	44.0	43.6	0.5	0.881	44.5	40.4	4.1	0.132	
Earnings greater than \$10 per hour (%)	18.1	16.6	1.6	0.522	17.1	12.5	4.6 **	0.021	
Ever employed in Quarter 10 ^c (%)	42.5	46.0	-3.5	0.166	45.8	43.8	2.0	0.373	

(continued)

Table 4.4 (continued)

Outcome	Sample Members from Programs with Low Fidelity				Sample Members from Programs with High Fidelity				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Work									
Average earnings in Quarter 10 ^c (\$)	1,232	1,257	-25.3	0.824	1,315	1,290	25.7	0.804	
Involvement in the criminal justice system									
Arrested since random assignment (%)	26.3	24.5	1.8	0.520	28.6	27.6	1.0	0.692	
Sample size	703	425			1,127	553			

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using data from the National Directory of New Hires and responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The H-statistic is used to assess whether the difference between the subgroup impacts is statistically significant. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are indicated as: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

NA = not applicable.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, and being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

^cThese outcomes are based on unemployment insurance data, not survey responses. The sample sizes for the low-fidelity program and control subgroups are 1,076 and 540 respectively. The sample sizes for the high-fidelity program and control subgroups are 1,586 and 676 respectively.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

YouthBuild attempts to engage disadvantaged young people who have not completed high school and help them make a successful transition to adulthood. It does so by offering education, job training, and other services in a program environment that emphasizes youth development and leadership. This report has presented the interim effects of the program, tracking young people for 30 months after they entered the study, or about 18 to 20 months after most participants left the program.

The results show a number of positive effects, most consistently on education and training. YouthBuild increased the rate at which young people earned their General Educational Development (GED) credentials and participated in vocational training, and led to an increase in postsecondary enrollment. Effects on work and earnings were less robust, although the program group did report somewhat higher wages and earnings. The program also led to an increase in young people's civic engagement, but had few effects on other youth-development outcome measures or on involvement in the criminal justice system.

The effects on education do suggest that the program may lead to longer-term effects on work and earnings. The next report will assess whether the increases in GED receipt and postsecondary enrollment are maintained 48 months after study enrollment. It is possible that these effects could increase in size, and that boosted postsecondary enrollment could translate into earning more degrees and improved job prospects.

The effects found here fall within the range of effects found for other programs. They are similar to or more positive than findings from other nonresidential programs, but somewhat smaller than the effects found for Job Corps and National Guard Youth ChalleNGe after a similar amount of time. ChalleNGe, for example, led to much larger increases in GED receipt and college enrollment, although that program served a younger population that had probably been engaged in school more recently. Job Corps, on the other hand, did not increase college enrollment but led to somewhat larger increases in GED receipt and a much larger increase in vocational certificate receipt. However, both of these programs are residential: Nearly all young people in those programs lived at the centers while they were participating. Residential programs have a number of advantages. They are more intensive, they pull young people away from sometimes disruptive home and community environments, and they can take advantage of positive group dynamics. But they are also not an option for young people who are not willing or able to live away from home, such as those with children (like 30 percent of the young people in the YouthBuild study when they enrolled). Residential programs are also more

expensive, so YouthBuild is likely to cost less than these other two programs. (A formal cost analysis of YouthBuild will be presented in the final impact report.)

The goal of the evaluation is to assess YouthBuild's effects on the young people it serves. In interpreting the program's effects, it is important to keep in mind the group of young people the program served and the actual comparison being made between the YouthBuild program group and the control group. YouthBuild served a group of young people who were disadvantaged, but highly motivated. The program's screening processes are designed to ensure that young people who enter the program have a good chance of completing it. As a result, young people who made it through the screening process and into the study (in both the program and control groups) were probably more motivated and persistent at the time they applied than the typical young person who has not completed high school. This level of motivation can be seen in the control group's high rate of participation in services during the follow-up period. By 30 months, for example, 72 percent of the control group had participated in education. Thus, this evaluation is estimating the effects of YouthBuild by comparing YouthBuild participants with similarly motivated young people who sought out other services in their communities. It is not estimating YouthBuild's effects relative to a group who received no services. This comparison is still a fair test, since the hypothesis is that YouthBuild should lead to better outcomes because it provides all of these services in one model and in the context of a strong focus on youth empowerment and development.

The evaluation is also a fair test in the sense that most programs in the study were found to have implemented the program with high overall fidelity, as documented in the earlier report. In other words, the effects presented here are a good assessment of YouthBuild as it was intended to operate. Nonetheless, that earlier report found that certain program components, particularly postsecondary preparation and youth-leadership services, were implemented less consistently than the other components, such as education and vocational training. In addition, even programs that achieved high fidelity in a certain program component often implemented it in different ways, adapting to their local circumstances. The final report will examine how certain variations in program features might affect YouthBuild's impacts.

Although it is too early to make judgments about YouthBuild's effects overall or the effects of certain types of programs, the findings here suggest that there may be room for improvement in at least a few areas: cultivating and identifying job openings for participants, preparing them for college, and maintaining contact with them after they leave the program. These components were rated the lowest by program participants. The lack of strong effects on employment suggests that the program could do a better job of helping participants move into work. More broadly, the services provided to young people after they leave the program could be strengthened or broadened. More efforts could be made to engage young people soon after they leave the program, and to keep them in contact with staff members.

In some cases, programs are already beginning to make changes that are likely to strengthen their impact, for example by putting increasing emphasis on creating connections with colleges. In an era when higher education or training is required to land a decent-paying job, this shift in emphasis seems like a move in the right direction. Similarly, many programs are beginning to offer vocational training not only in construction but in other areas as well. While construction training is integral to YouthBuild's identity and helps it to achieve its community service goal by building housing for low-income communities, it is possible that exclusively focusing on construction could limit YouthBuild's effects. The recent downturn in the housing market made it very difficult for many programs to provide adequate training opportunities for young people and also probably limited programs' ability to place young people in related jobs. Very few (about 10 percent) of the young people in the YouthBuild group who were working at 30 months reported working in construction. In recent years, many programs have started offering training in other areas in addition to construction, such as in information technology or health care. As noted earlier, in 2014, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) began allowing selected grantees (those who had received prior grants) the option of offering a "construction plus" model, in which training is offered for construction but also for other high-demand jobs.

For some programs, one key to improving services is related to funding. In general, the implementation report documented that funding stability was an important issue for programs. Most programs did not have funding to sustain operations for several years. Instead, they were heavily reliant on receiving DOL grants every few years that require them to match 25 percent of the grant with nonfederal resources. As noted in Chapter 2, 13 programs in the evaluation shut down after serving the cohort of young people enrolled in the study. Unstable funding inevitably affects staff stability. Inconsistent or uncertain program funding means that staff positions may have to be eliminated or that staff members may seek other opportunities. As discussed in the earlier implementation report, many programs said that they did not have the staff time to devote to cultivating and identifying jobs for participants or to other transition services, and those with larger budgets generally did better in these areas. Similarly, staff turnover affected young people's engagement in follow-up services, since new staff members would not have relationships with program graduates built while they were attending the program.

Finally, another important part of the context for the evaluation is the economy. Although the Great Recession had officially ended by the time these young people entered the study and participated in YouthBuild, employment and wages had not yet recovered. Unemployment rates remained high for young people during the follow-up period for this report, and they were especially high for young people without high school diplomas and for black and Latino young people. One of YouthBuild's goals is to help these young people get an early

advantage in the labor market. A later report from the evaluation will assess whether the increases in education and training observed so far will have longer-term effects.

Appendix A

Site Selection, Random Assignment, the Analysis Model, and Previous Evaluations

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This appendix describes the processes used to select YouthBuild programs to participate in the evaluation, and describes how random assignment procedures were implemented at each program. It also includes a discussion of the effect of random assignment on recruitment, eligibility, and enrollment. The final section discusses the impact analysis model's specifications, including weighting and the handling of missing data.

Site Selection

Not all programs receiving U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) funding at the start of the evaluation could be included in the evaluation, either because they were unable to continue providing services during the period in which study participants were to be enrolled, or because of other concerns about their suitability. Thus the first step in the evaluation was to select programs for inclusion. Deciding on the total number of programs to include in the impact component of the evaluation required a balance of three objectives: (1) maximizing the representativeness of the sample and the statistical power of the impact analysis, (2) ensuring high-quality implementation of program enrollment and random assignment procedures, and (3) evaluation budget considerations. Ultimately, 75 programs were included in the evaluation. Fifty-eight of these were selected from the programs awarded grants by DOL in 2011, and 17 were selected from programs that did not receive DOL funding in 2011 but did receive funding from CNCS.¹ The latter programs are referred to here as CNCS-funded programs, although they might have received funding from other, non-DOL sources.²

As shown in Appendix Table A.1, the programs participating in the study look very similar to all programs funded by DOL and CNCS in 2011.

Selecting DOL-Funded Programs

DOL awarded grants to 74 YouthBuild programs in May 2011.³ Of these 74, 3 programs were deemed to be a poor fit for the evaluation because young people assigned to the control group were likely to receive substantially the same services as those in the program group. Among these programs were ones that operated in conjunction with the Conservation Corps, and ones embedded in charter schools where control group members could remain in the

¹DOL and CNCS chose to include the CNCS-funded programs in the evaluation in order to examine whether DOL-funded programs have different impacts than CNCS-funded programs.

²A number of these programs subsequently received funding from DOL as part of the 2012 funding cycle.

³An additional two programs received funding to supplement their March 2011 grants. These two programs were not considered part of the May grantee class.

Appendix Table A.1
Representativeness of Study Programs

Program Response	Percentage of Study Programs	Percentage of All Programs ^a
<u>Years operating YouthBuild</u>		
1-3	0.0	4.5
4-6	32.0	33.6
7-10	25.3	22.7
More than 10	42.7	39.1
<u>Yearly operating budget^b</u>		
Missing	8.0	9.1
Less than \$500,000	29.3	30.0
Between \$500,000 and \$1 million	38.7	38.2
\$1 million and above	24.0	22.7
<u>Funders^c</u>		
DOL	93.3	90.0
CNCS	45.3	52.7
Private foundation	52.0	47.3
State or locality	57.3	54.5
Some other entity	14.7	13.6
<u>Predominant funder</u>		
DOL	0.0	0.0
CNCS	0.0	0.0
Private foundation	1.3	0.9
State or locality	5.3	6.4
Some other entity	0.0	0.0
<u>Number of years program director has worked at YouthBuild</u>		
Less than 1	8.0	9.1
1-3	25.3	26.4
4-6	26.7	27.3
7-10	16.0	15.5
More than 10	24.0	21.8
Sample size	75	110

(continued)

Appendix Table A.1

SOURCE: Calculations based on the YouthBuild grantee survey.

NOTES: Due to rounding, the percentages in some categories may not sum to 100 percent.

^aAll programs that received funding from the DOL or CNCS in 2011.

^bThis amount represents the YouthBuild program's operating budget for the fiscal year when the 2011 YouthBuild grants were awarded. The awards were announced May 2011 and were received in the months that followed.

^cCategories are not mutually exclusive, as some programs reported having multiple funders.

school and also receive some type of vocational training. Including these programs in the evaluation would not have provided a true test of YouthBuild's effects, since the program and control groups would have received nearly identical services. The final sample frame for selection of DOL-funded programs thus included 71 programs.⁴

Given budget constraints, 60 of these programs were selected to participate in the evaluation using probability-proportional-to-size sampling. Each program had a probability of selection that was proportional to its expected enrollment in a given program year. This method gave each YouthBuild slot (or young person served) an equal chance of being selected for the evaluation, meaning that the resulting sample of young people who enrolled in the study should be representative of the young people served by these programs. All of the 60 selected programs were required by DOL to participate in the evaluation. Of these, however, the study team determined during initial discussions with program staff members that 2 programs would be unable to enroll any study-group participants during the intake period. The final sample of DOL programs was thus 58.

Selecting CNCS-Funded Programs

CNCS funds programs through its National Direct grant to YouthBuild USA. Forty YouthBuild programs received CNCS grants but not DOL funding in 2011. After reviewing the available information and conducting phone calls with each of the 40 programs, the evaluation team determined that many of these programs, particularly those receiving small CNCS grants, were likely to shut down in 2012 or not enroll young people during the study enrollment period. For this reason the study team, along with DOL's Employment and Training Administration

⁴According to their grant proposals, the 3 excluded programs planned to serve a total of 133 young people in a given program year. The other 71 programs planned to serve a total of 3,171 in a given program year. Since the excluded programs accounted for only 4.1 percent of the expected enrollment among DOL-funded programs, the study team's ability to extrapolate the study findings to all DOL-funded programs is not compromised.

and CNCS staff members, opted to select the 24 programs that received CNCS grants of at least \$95,000 in 2010. Of these 24, 4 programs subsequently determined that they would shut down or otherwise be unable to enroll new participants during the intake period. An additional 3 programs were deemed to be unsuitable for the evaluation because they operated in areas where control group members would be very likely to receive services similar or identical to those received by the program group. The resulting sample of CNCS programs was thus 17.

Developing and Implementing Random Assignment Procedures

Once YouthBuild programs were selected for participation in the random assignment study, the study team visited each of them to meet with its leaders and program staff members to further explain the study, answer questions, and begin developing plans for the random assignment of young people.

The study team was flexible about when random assignment was conducted, relative to programs' recruitment activities. Random assignment could be conducted before, during, or after Mental Toughness Orientation. Decisions about the timing of random assignment were made in partnership with the program, with the goal of conducting random assignment after the point in the recruitment process when a program experienced the largest drop-off, so as to maximize the possibility that young people in the program group would ultimately enroll in YouthBuild. It was also important, however, to ensure that random assignment was not placed so late in the process that the control group would have experienced a significant portion of the program. For example, the team avoided placing random assignment toward the end of a lengthy Mental Toughness Orientation.

Once the study team and a program developed a random assignment plan together, the study team customized a research procedures manual for that program's staff. This manual detailed the research design and the steps required of program staff members at each step from outreach through enrollment. Members of the study team usually conducted another site visit to train all staff members in these procedures, including the procedures for entering data into the MDRC random assignment system; these data included basic identifying information about study participants such as their names and Social Security numbers.⁵

⁵Each local program was given a number of "wild cards" that it could use to allow certain applicants it selected to bypass random assignment and be allowed to participate. This option was used, for example, when a young person's situation was particularly compelling or when a family member was already a YouthBuild participant. Each program was allowed to use 5 percent of its program slots for wild cards. The minimum each program received was one wild card.

The study team was in communication with programs regularly to monitor their progress toward their outreach and recruitment goals, and to monitor the drop-off from application to enrollment. If a program was having challenges with recruitment, the study team worked with that program to brainstorm ways to improve its numbers. For example, a program might do more outreach, delay the start of certain processes (like Mental Toughness Orientation), or engage in multiple rounds of recruitment. The study team offered advice and support throughout; YouthBuild USA coaches and others were also helpful advisers when programs were experiencing challenges.

Seventy-two programs successfully completed random assignment at least once during the evaluation enrollment period of August 2011 to January 2013. The study team allowed 37 programs that had difficulty reaching their recruitment targets to enroll young people without going through random assignment for at least one enrollment cycle, sometimes several. Programs might request to bypass random assignment when not enough applicants were present on the day of random assignment, when they felt they needed to focus on meeting their DOL or CNCS grant recruitment benchmarks, or when they were experiencing significant delays in starting their program cycles because they could not recruit enough young people. Three programs were never able to conduct random assignment due to low recruitment numbers.

Appendix Table A.2 presents the baseline characteristics for the full sample and then the program and control groups created through the random assignment process. As would be expected with random assignment, there are few differences between the two groups with respect to these baseline characteristics.

The Analysis Model

The basic estimation strategy is to compare average outcomes for the program and control groups. Regression adjustment in a linear regression model increases the power of the statistical tests.

Outcome data were processed according to standard procedures to check for outliers or other irregularities. Outlier values on employment-related outcome variables (such as earnings, hourly wages, and weekly hours worked) were set to missing. These outlier values affected less than 1 percent of the sample for any given outcome.

The impact analysis used the following model:

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta P_{ij} + \delta X_{ij} + \gamma_j + \varepsilon_{ij},$$

Where Y_{ij} is the outcome of interest (such as “earned a high school equivalency credential,” “employed,” or “involved in civic activities”) for sample member i in site j ,

α is the intercept of the regression,

P_{ij} is an indicator for membership in the program group,

X_{ij} is the series of binary variables that represents the baseline covariates for a sample member, including age, gender, whether the person applied to YouthBuild at a CNCS-funded program, highest grade completed, race/ethnicity, whether or not a young person was a parent, and high school diploma or equivalency completion, for sample member i in site j ,

δ is the set of regression coefficients for X_{ij} ,

γ represents program fixed effects to account for varying random assignment ratios by site,

and ε_{ij} is the random error term for sample member i in site j .

For the analysis of survey outcomes, weights were added to the model to account for varying selection probabilities by cohort and research group.

For an observation with a missing baseline covariate (see the list for X_{ij} above), that covariate was assigned the average sample value and a dummy variable indicating “missing” for that covariate was set to 1 and thus included in the analysis model with X_{ij} . Fewer than 2 percent of observations had missing values for any given covariate except parent status. Parent status was missing for 11 percent of the sample. Observations with missing values for an outcome variable were dropped from the impact analysis for that outcome. Missing values for outcome variables were not imputed.

Previous Evaluations

Appendix Table A.3 summarizes some previous evaluations of programs for young people without high school diplomas.

Appendix Table A.2
Baseline Characteristics by Research Group

Characteristic (%)	Full Sample	YouthBuild Group	Control Group
<u>Age</u>			*
16-18 years old	33.0	34.2	30.3
19-21 years old	46.3	45.5	48.0
22 years old or older	20.7	20.3	21.6
Male	64.1	63.9	64.7
<u>Race/ethnicity^a</u>			*
Hispanic or Latino	14.6	14.6	14.4
White, non-Hispanic	15.3	15.6	14.6
Black, non-Hispanic	62.9	62.9	63.1
Other ^b	6.0	6.0	5.9
Not specified	1.1	0.8	1.8
Has a child	30.0	29.0	32.1 **
<u>Highest grade completed^c</u>			
6th or lower	0.4	0.4	0.4
7th	1.0	1.0	0.9
8th	7.5	7.7	6.8
9th	18.6	18.9	18.0
10th	26.2	26.4	25.6
11th	34.9	34.2	36.5
12th	10.0	9.8	10.4
Has a high school diploma or equivalent	9.2	8.8	10.0
Has a diagnosed disability (learning or physical)	10.6	11.1	9.5
<u>Housing status</u>			
Lives with family	61.0	61.7	59.5
Owns/rents apartment, room, or house	15.2	15.2	15.2
Is staying at someone's apartment, room, or house	15.7	15.2	16.8
Is staying with foster guardian/in foster system	0.6	0.7	0.4
Lives in a halfway house/transitional house	1.2	1.0	1.5
Is in residential treatment	0.3	0.3	0.2
Is homeless	3.0	2.7	3.5

(continued)

Appendix Table A.2 (continued)

Characteristic (%)	Full Sample	YouthBuild Group	Control Group
<u>Who suggested you apply to YouthBuild?</u>			
Family member or relative	29.8	29.0	31.3
No one	32.5	32.9	31.6
School counselor, truant officer, teacher, or principal	4.3	4.3	4.1
Friend	20.7	20.6	20.7
Other	9.7	9.9	9.2
<u>Reasons for applying to YouthBuild</u>			
GED credential	87.7	88.0	87.0
College	63.1	62.6	64.4
To get life on track	88.2	88.5	87.6
Job	84.6	85.1	83.5
Training	67.2	66.7	68.2
Friends	7.0	7.4	6.2
Because of children or the need to support family	1.5	1.5	1.6
Other	4.4	4.6	4.0
Sample size	3,929	2,700	1,229

SOURCE: Calculations based on the YouthBuild baseline data form.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as follows: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

^aCategories are mutually exclusive.

^b"Other" includes Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan, and responses of multiple races/ethnicities.

^cThis information is missing for some sample members.

Appendix Table A.3

Selected Evaluations of Programs for Young People Without High School Diplomas

Evaluation (Dates)	Target Group	Program Model	Sample Size (Number of Sites)	Summary of Results
<u>Nonresidential</u>				
American Conservation and Youth Service Corps (1993-1996)	Mostly 18- to 25-year-old out-of-school young people	Paid work experience in community service projects, education and training, support services	1,009 young people (4 sites)	Increases in employment and decreases in arrests, particularly for African-American men
Conservation Corps Evaluation (2011)	Mostly 18- to 25-year-old out-of-school young people, mostly students of color	Temporary, full-time, subsidized work in community service projects; basic adult education; opportunities to earn college credit; case management; job-readiness skills	2,043 young people (21 sites)	No significant impacts on employment or being in school
JOBSTART (1985-1993)	17- to 21-year-old high school dropouts with low reading levels	Education, training, support services, job-placement assistance	1,914 young people (13 sites)	Increases in GED receipt; few impacts on labor-market outcomes (except at one site)
National Job Training Partnership Act (out-of-school young people analysis) (1987-1994)	Disadvantaged 16- to 21-year-old out-of-school young people	Education, job-skills training, job placement, on-the-job training, and support services	5,690 young people (16 sites)	No earnings impacts for women or for men who had not been arrested; possibly negative impacts for men who had been arrested
Center for Employment Training Replication (1995-1999)	Disadvantaged, out-of-school young people ages 16 to 21	Education and vocational training	1,485 young people (12 sites)	Few impacts on employment and earnings overall; some impacts for younger participants

(continued)

Appendix Table A.3 (continued)

Evaluation (Dates)	Target Group	Program Model	Sample Size (Number of Sites)	Summary of Results
<u>Residential</u>				
Job Corps (1994-2003)	Disadvantaged young people ages 16 to 24	Employment, education, and training in a (mostly) residential setting	15,386 young people (nationwide)	Earnings and employment impacts in Years 3 and 4 of the study period; impacts faded after Year 4, according to administrative data; results appear stronger for older participants (those 20 to 24 years old)
National Guard Youth ChalleNGe (2005-2011)	High school dropouts ages 16 to 18 who are drug free and not heavily involved with the justice system	Education, service to community, and other components in a quasi-military residential setting; 12-month postresidential mentoring program	1,173 young people (10 sites nationwide)	Impacts on GED receipt, postsecondary enrollment, and employment and earnings at the three-year follow-up point

SOURCES: Maynard (1980); Gueron (1984); Jastrzab, Masker, Blomquist, and Orr (1996); Cave, Bos, Doolittle, and Toussaint (1993); Orr et al. (1997); Quint, Bos, and Polit (1997); Miller et al. (2005); Schochet, Burghardt, and McConnell (2008); Millenky, Bloom, Muller-Ravett, and Broadus (2011); Price et al. (2011).

Appendix B

Response Analyses for the 12- and 30-Month Surveys

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The YouthBuild 12- and 30- month surveys provide information about the YouthBuild sample members on topics such as participation in training and education, employment and job characteristics, youth development, and other outcome measures. As the survey was administered to a subset of the YouthBuild sample, it is necessary to assess the reliability of impact results for the survey sample in two ways. First, the results for the survey sample may or may not generalize to (or be representative of) the full sample because (1) only a subset of the YouthBuild sample was selected to be interviewed and (2) individuals who responded to the surveys may be different from those who were selected for the survey but did not respond. Second, the failure of some sample members to respond to the surveys may compromise the validity of the impact estimates, particularly if the program and control groups responded to the survey at different rates.

This appendix presents a description of the survey fielding efforts, assesses whether the survey can be generalized to the research sample, and assesses its validity for estimating program impacts. Overall, the results suggest that the survey samples provide valid estimates of the program's effects that can be generalized to the research sample.

Sample Selection and Survey Administration

The research sample includes 3,929 sample members. Due to budget constraints, only 3,436 people in the full sample could be selected to be interviewed for the survey (that is, to be in the fielded sample), as described in Appendix Box B.1. This fielded sample is used for all surveys in this evaluation.

All research sample members who were randomly assigned between August 2011 and February 2012 were included in the fielded sample. It was necessary to include all research sample members enrolled during those months in the fielded sample because the 12-month survey began before the total research sample size was known. When study enrollment ended in February 2013, the total research sample was large enough that it was necessary to select a subsample of those randomly assigned from March 2012 through January 2013. Specifically, all control group members were included and 76 percent of program group members were randomly selected *from each program*. This sampling plan ensured that each program was represented in the survey analysis and helped achieve a more balanced sample of program and control group members.

Appendix Table B.1 shows baseline characteristics for the research sample (3,929), the fielded sample (3,436), and the nonfielded sample (493). Overall, there are very few statistically significant differences between the fielded and nonfielded samples. Fielded sample members were more likely than nonfielded sample members to have had children when they enrolled in the study, but less likely to have had a diagnosed disability.

Appendix Box B.1

Sample Definitions

Research sample: All 3,929 sample members who were randomly assigned during the sample intake period, which extended from August 2011 through January 2013.

Fielded sample: The total of 3,436 research sample members who were selected for the surveys.

Nonfielded sample: The 493 research sample members who were not selected for the surveys.

Respondent sample: Fielded sample members who completed a given follow-up survey.

Nonrespondent sample: Fielded sample members who did not complete a given follow-up survey for various reasons, for example, because they could not be located or because they refused to be interviewed.*

*The nonrespondent sample at 12 months includes 9 deceased sample members, 63 incarcerated sample members, and 3 sample members in active military service. At 30 months, the nonrespondent sample includes 15 deceased sample members, 76 incarcerated sample members, and 2 sample members in active military service.

The 12-month survey was fielded (administered to survey recipients) between December 2012 and May 2014. The 30-month survey was fielded between January 2014 and December 2015. In both, sample members were asked to complete the survey online; sample members who did not do so were then called on the phone and asked to complete the survey that way. If a sample member still could not be reached, a field representative of the survey firm followed up in person. It took slightly different amounts of time to complete the survey online, by phone, or in person, but on average sample members completed the survey in less than 43 minutes.

Characteristics of Respondents and Nonrespondents in the Fielded Sample

Of the 3,436 young people who were chosen to be surveyed, 2,784 completed the 12-month follow-up survey and 2,756 completed the 30-month follow-up survey, response rates of 81

Appendix Table B.1

Selected Baseline Characteristics of the Fielded and Nonfielded Samples

Characteristic (%)	Full Sample	Fielded Sample	Nonfielded Sample
<u>Age</u>			
16-18 years old	33.0	32.9	33.7
19-21 years old	46.3	46.0	48.1
22 years old or older	20.7	21.0	18.3
Male	64.3	64.2	64.7
<u>Race/ethnicity^a</u>			
Hispanic or Latino	14.6	14.3	16.5
White, non-Hispanic	15.3	15.4	14.8
Black, non-Hispanic	63.0	63.0	63.0
Other ^b	6.0	6.0	5.5
Not specified	1.1	1.2	0.2
Has a child	33.7	34.2	29.6*
<u>Highest grade completed^c</u>			
6th or below	0.4	0.4	0.6
7th	1.0	1.0	1.2
8th	7.6	7.9	5.6
9th	18.9	19.2	16.7
10th	26.6	26.2	29.1
11th	35.5	35.5	35.1
12th	10.1	9.9	11.8
Has a high school diploma or equivalent	9.3	9.0	10.9
Has a diagnosed disability (learning or physical)	11.1	10.7	13.8*
<u>Housing status</u>			
Lives with family	63.0	62.8	64.1
Owns/rents apartment, room, or house	15.7	15.7	15.6
Is staying at someone's apartment, room, or house	16.2	16.3	15.4
Is staying with foster guardian/in foster system	0.6	0.6	0.6
Lives in a halfway house/transitional house	1.2	1.2	1.1
Is in residential treatment	0.3	0.2	0.4
Is homeless	3.0	3.1	2.7
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0

(continued)

Appendix Table B.1 (continued)

Characteristic (%)	Full Sample	Fielded Sample	Nonfielded Sample
<u>Who suggested applying to YouthBuild</u>			
Family member or relative	30.7	30.7	30.7
No one	33.6	34.1	30.1
School counselor, truant officer, teacher, or principal	4.4	4.4	4.6
Friend	21.3	21.1	23.0
Judge or someone from the justice system	3.3	3.3	3.5
Someone else	4.3	4.3	4.2
Case manager, counselor, mentor, or program staff member	2.4	2.2	4.0
<u>Reasons for applying to YouthBuild</u>			
GED credential	90.9	91.3	88.8
College	66.0	66.1	65.0
To get life on track	92.1	92.2	91.2
Job	88.7	89.0	86.9
Training	71.4	71.6	70.4
Friends	7.7	7.8	7.2
Sample size	3,929	3,436	493

SOURCE: Calculations based on the YouthBuild baseline data form.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

^aCategories are mutually exclusive.

^b"Other" includes Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan, and responses of multiple races/ethnicities.

^cThis information is missing for some sample members.

percent and 80 percent, respectively; 2,511 completed both the 12- and 30-month surveys.¹ For both surveys, the program group had slightly higher response rates than the control group (for example, for the 30-month survey the response rate was 81 percent for the program group and 78 percent for the control group). The differential was not greater than 3 percentage points and the differences between response rates were not statistically significant in either survey.

Appendix Tables B.2 and B.3 present selected baseline characteristics of survey respondents and nonrespondents for the two surveys. Some differences are to be expected, since individuals who respond to surveys tend to be different from those who do not. Nonrespondents are often people in harder-to-reach groups, such as those with lower incomes and greater mobility. The table illustrates these types of differences. In both surveys, for example, the respondent sample has a higher percentage of women than the nonrespondent sample. This finding is not surprising, as women often respond to surveys at higher rates than men.² The respondent and nonrespondent samples for both surveys also had different racial and ethnic makeups and different housing statuses. Respondents to the 30-month survey were less likely than nonrespondents to have reported a disability when they enrolled in the study.

These differences were also tested in a logistic model, in which the probability of response was regressed on the baseline covariates shown in Table B.2. A test of joint significance is statistically significant for each survey. The differences between the respondent and nonrespondent samples suggest that some caution should be exercised when generalizing the survey findings to the research sample. However, because the response rate was fairly high (nonrespondents represent less than 20 percent of the fielded sample), the respondent sample still looks similar to the fielded sample.

Comparisons Between the Research Groups in the Survey Respondent Sample

Although random assignment research designs minimize potential bias, there is a possibility that the selective nature of the survey-response process could result in differences between the characteristics of the program group and the control group. If such differences arise, they could make the impact estimates derived from the respondent sample less reliable.

¹The main text of the report and the impact analysis use a broader measure of survey response than the analysis presented in this appendix. (For example, 2,845 sample members answered at least some questions on the 12-month follow-up survey and 2,808 sample members did so for the 30-month follow-up survey.) This appendix and supporting analyses use survey completion to define “respondents.” Results using the broader measure are similar to those shown here.

²Groves (2006).

Appendix Table B.2
Selected Baseline Characteristics of Respondents and
Nonrespondents to the 12-Month Survey

Characteristic (%)	Respondents	Nonrespondents	Full Sample
<u>Age</u>			
16-18 years old	32.8	33.3	33.0
19-21 years old	46.4	44.3	46.3
22 years old or older	20.7	22.4	20.7
Male	62.2	72.5	64.3***
<u>Race/ethnicity^a</u>			
Hispanic or Latino	13.9	16.0	14.6
White, non-Hispanic	15.5	15.0	15.3
Black, non-Hispanic	64.1	58.6	63.0
Other ^b	5.4	8.6	6.0
Not specified	1.1	1.8	1.1
Has a child	33.3	38.5	33.7**
<u>Highest grade completed^c</u>			
6th or below	0.3	0.6	0.4
7th	1.0	0.8	1.0
8th	8.2	6.6	7.6
9th	19.3	18.4	18.9
10th	25.6	28.8	26.6
11th	35.3	36.4	35.5
12th	10.2	8.4	10.1
Has a high school diploma or equivalent	9.4	7.5	9.3
Has a diagnosed disability (learning or physical)	10.6	11.5	11.1
<u>Housing status</u>			
Lives with family	64.1	57.4	63.0
Owns/rents apartment, room, or house	15.8	15.3	15.7
Is staying at someone's apartment, room, or house	15.0	21.7	16.2
Is staying with foster guardian/in foster system	0.6	0.6	0.6
Lives in a halfway house/transitional house	1.1	1.6	1.2
Is in residential treatment	0.1	1.0	0.3
Is homeless	3.3	2.2	3.0

(continued)

Appendix Table B.2 (continued)

Characteristic (%)	Respondents	Nonrespondents	Full Sample
<u>Who suggested applying to YouthBuild</u>			
Family member or relative	31.3	28.4	30.7
No one	34.6	31.9	33.6
School counselor, truant officer, teacher, or principal	4.1	5.6	4.4
Friend	20.7	22.8	21.3
Judge or someone from the justice system	3.1	4.1	3.3
Someone else	4.1	5.3	4.3
Case manager, counselor, mentor, or program staff member	2.2	1.9	2.4
<u>Reasons for applying to YouthBuild</u>			
GED	91.2	91.4	90.9
College	65.9	66.9	66.0
To get life on track	92.2	92.3	92.1
Job	88.9	89.4	88.7
Training	70.9	74.5	71.4*
Friends	7.5	9.1	7.7
Sample size	2,784	652	3,929

SOURCE: Calculations based on the YouthBuild baseline data form.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aCategories are mutually exclusive.

^b"Other" includes Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan, and responses of multiple races/ethnicities.

^cThis information is missing for some sample members.

Appendix Table B.3
Selected Baseline Characteristics of
Respondents and Nonrespondents to the 30-Month Survey

Characteristic (%)	Respondents	Nonrespondents	Full Sample
<u>Age</u>			
16-18 years old	32.7	34.0	33.0
19-21 years old	46.2	45.3	46.3
22 years old or older	21.1	20.7	20.7
Male	61.8	74.0	64.3***
<u>Race/ethnicity^a</u>			

Hispanic or Latino	13.7	16.8	14.6
White, non-Hispanic	14.7	18.1	15.3
Black, non-Hispanic	64.8	56.0	63.0
Other ^b	5.7	7.5	6.0
Not specified	1.1	1.6	1.1
Has a child	34.2	34.2	33.7
<u>Highest grade completed^c</u>			
6th or below	0.3	0.7	0.4
7th	1.0	0.7	1.0
8th	7.8	8.0	7.6
9th	19.4	18.2	18.9
10th	26.4	25.6	26.6
11th	35.0	37.7	35.5
12th	10.1	8.9	10.1
Has a high school diploma or equivalent	9.2	8.4	9.3
Has a diagnosed disability (learning or physical)	10.2	13.1	11.1***
<u>Housing status</u>			

Lives with family	64.5	56.0	63.0
Owns/rents apartment, room, or house	15.4	17.1	15.7
Is staying at someone's apartment, room, or house	15.4	19.8	16.2
Is staying with foster guardian/in foster system	0.6	0.6	0.6
Lives in a halfway house/transitional house	1.0	2.0	1.2
Is in residential treatment	0.1	0.9	0.3
Is homeless	3.0	3.6	3.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0

(continued)

Appendix Table B.3 (continued)

Characteristic (%)	Respondents	Nonrespondents	Full Sample
<u>Who suggested applying to YouthBuild</u>			
Family member or relative	31.3	28.4	30.7
No one	34.5	32.1	33.6
School counselor, truant officer, teacher, or principal	4.2	5.3	4.4
Friend	20.8	22.2	21.3
Judge or someone from the justice system	3.0	4.2	3.3
Someone else	4.1	5.0	4.3
Case manager, counselor, mentor, or program staff member	2.0	2.7	2.4
<u>Reasons for applying to YouthBuild</u>			
GED	90.9	92.6	90.9
College	66.3	65.4	66.0
To get life on track	92.3	92.0	92.1
Job	89.0	88.7	88.7
Training	71.7	71.2	71.4
Friends	7.6	8.4	7.7
Sample size	2,756	680	3,929

SOURCE: Calculations based on the YouthBuild baseline data form.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aCategories are mutually exclusive.

^b"Other" includes Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan, and responses of multiple races/ethnicities.

^cThis information is missing for some sample members.

It does not appear that these differences did arise. Selected baseline characteristics for program and control group survey respondents are shown in Appendix Tables B.4 and B.5 for the 12- and 30-month surveys, respectively. Overall, the two groups look nearly identical. The only statistically significant difference that emerged was that control group respondents to the 12-month survey reported more frequently than the program group that they had applied to YouthBuild to earn a high school equivalency credential. Comparisons between the program and control groups for those that completed both survey waves also found no significant differences.

Appendix Table B.4

**Selected Baseline Characteristics of Program and Control Group
Respondents to the 12-Month Survey**

Characteristic (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group
<u>Age</u>		
16-18 years old	34.0	30.7
19-21 years old	45.3	48.6
22 years old or older	20.7	20.7
Male	61.9	62.9
<u>Race/ethnicity^a</u>		
Hispanic or Latino	13.7	14.4
White, non-Hispanic	15.7	15.0
Black, non-Hispanic	64.0	64.3
Other ^b	5.8	4.8
Not specified	0.8	1.6
Has a child	32.7	34.3
<u>Highest grade completed^c</u>		
6th or below	0.3	0.3
7th	1.1	0.9
8th	8.5	7.5
9th	19.8	18.5
10th	25.2	26.4
11th	35.4	35.1
12th	9.7	11.2
Has a high school diploma or equivalent	8.8	10.6
Has a diagnosed disability (learning or physical)	10.8	10.1
<u>Housing status</u>		
Lives with family	64.8	62.7
Owns/rents apartment, room, or house	15.8	15.7
Is staying at someone's apartment, room, or house	14.6	15.9
Is staying with foster guardian/in foster system	0.7	0.4
Lives in a halfway house/transitional house	0.8	1.7
Is in residential treatment	0.1	0.1
Is homeless	3.2	3.5

(continued)

Appendix Table B.4 (continued)

Characteristic (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group
<u>Who suggested applying to YouthBuild</u>		
Family member or relative	30.0	33.6
No one	35.6	32.5
School counselor, truant officer, teacher, or principal	4.0	4.3
Friend	20.7	20.7
Judge or someone from the justice system	3.2	2.8
Someone else	4.0	4.1
Case manager, counselor, mentor, or program staff member	2.3	2.0
<u>Reasons for applying to YouthBuild</u>		
GED	92.0	89.7**
College	65.8	66.1
To get life on track	92.7	91.2
Job	89.2	88.3
Training	70.1	72.5
Friends	7.8	6.9
Sample size	1,815	969

SOURCE: Calculations based on the YouthBuild baseline data form.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aCategories are mutually exclusive.

^b"Other" includes Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan, and responses of multiple races/ethnicities.

^cThis information is missing for some sample members.

Appendix Table B.5

**Selected Baseline Characteristics of Program and Control Group
Respondents to the 30-Month Survey**

Characteristic (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group
<u>Age</u>		
16-18 years old	33.7	30.7
19-21 years old	45.0	48.6
22 years old or older	21.3	20.7
Male	61.7	61.8
<u>Race/ethnicity^a</u>		
Hispanic or Latino	13.4	14.2
White, non-Hispanic	14.8	14.5
Black, non-Hispanic	64.8	64.8
Other ^b	6.0	5.0
Not specified	0.9	1.6
Has a child	33.8	35.0
<u>Highest grade completed^c</u>		
6th or below	0.2	0.3
7th	1.1	0.8
8th	8.2	7.2
9th	19.8	18.7
10th	26.4	26.4
11th	34.4	36.0
12th	9.9	10.7
Has a high school diploma or equivalent	8.8	10.1
Has a diagnosed disability (learning or physical)	10.5	9.6
<u>Housing status</u>		
Lives with family	64.9	63.8
Owns/rents apartment, room, or house	15.7	14.7
Is staying at someone's apartment, room, or house	14.7	16.7
Is staying with foster guardian/in foster system	0.7	0.4
Lives in a halfway house/transitional house	1.0	1.2
Is in residential treatment	0.1	0.0
Is homeless	2.9	3.0
Other	0.0	0.1

(continued)

Appendix Table B.5 (continued)

Characteristic (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group
<u>Who suggested applying to YouthBuild</u>		
Family member or relative	30.1	33.4
No one	35.6	32.7
School counselor, truant officer, teacher, or principal	4.2	4.1
Friend	20.6	21.3
Judge or someone from the justice system	3.1	2.9
Someone else	4.2	4.0
Case manager, counselor, mentor, or program staff member	2.2	1.7
<u>Reasons for applying to YouthBuild</u>		
GED	91.5	89.9
College	66.1	66.5
To get life on track	92.8	91.2
Job	89.4	88.4
Training	71.3	72.4
Friends	8.2	6.5
Sample size	1,795	961

SOURCE: Calculations based on the YouthBuild baseline data form.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aCategories are mutually exclusive.

^b"Other" includes Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan, and responses of multiple races/ethnicities.

^cThis information is missing for some sample members.

Consistency of Impacts

A previous section suggested some caution in interpreting the results of the surveys. Specifically, as discussed above, there are some differences in baseline characteristics between the sample members who responded to the survey and those who did not. This section helps to put the survey results in context by comparing the impacts estimated based on administrative records for respondents with the impacts for nonrespondents. These comparisons were carried out for both surveys. Comparisons using administrative records provide the best estimate of the program's effects because they use the full program group and control group, not a potentially nonrandom subset of survey respondents. If the respondent and nonrespondent survey samples have similar impacts estimated using administrative data, it would give more credibility to the survey analysis.

Appendix Tables B.6 and B.7 present the results, showing impacts for college outcomes using National Student Clearinghouse enrollment records. (It was not possible to conduct a similar test using data from the National Database of New Hires data due to federal restrictions on researchers' access to these data.) Overall, the impacts are nearly identical for each sample at each survey. A test of joint statistical significance across all educational outcomes further confirmed that survey respondents and nonrespondents did not differ across these outcomes.

Appendix Table B.6

Impacts on Education Based on Records Data at 12 Months

Impact (Percentage Points)	Respondent Sample	Nonrespondent Sample
Attended college since random assignment		
Enrolled in a 4-year institution	0.88	0.33
Enrolled in a 2-year institution	7.75	7.14
Enrolled in a less-than-2-year institution	0.05	0.36
Public	8.25	7.43
Private	0.55	0.05
Full time	2.89	3.54
Received a degree	0.89	0.82
Certificate	0.68	1.00
Associate's	0.19	0.12
Bachelor's	0.00	-0.40*
Master's	0.04	0.00
Sample size	2,784	1,145

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on National Student Clearinghouse data.

NOTE: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Appendix Table B.7

Impacts on Education Based on Records Data at 30 Months

Impact (Percentage Points)	Respondent Sample	Nonrespondent Sample
Attended college since random assignment		
Enrolled in a 4-year institution	0.42	1.45
Enrolled in a 2-year institution	7.63	7.45
Enrolled in a less-than-2-year institution	0.23	-0.15
Public	8.01	7.95
Private	0.28	0.79
Full time	2.62	4.23
Received a degree	0.45	1.67
Certificate	0.47	1.40
Associate's	0.19	0.13
Bachelor's	-0.11	0.00
Master's	0.00	0.00
Sample size	2,756	1,173

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on National Student Clearinghouse data.

NOTE: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Appendix C

**Survey Responses About YouthBuild Experiences and
Service Receipt at 30 Months**

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Appendix Table C.1

YouthBuild Experience, Program Group Only, at 30 Months

Outcome (%)	YouthBuild Group
Ever received YouthBuild services	80.0
<i>Current status, among those who ever received YouthBuild services</i>	
Currently enrolled	2.3
Graduated from the program	68.1
No longer enrolled and did not graduate	29.6
Reason for not participating in or not completing the program	
Transportation	26.5
Incarceration	10.1
Program schedule	17.5
Another job	27.0
Moved	21.7
Birth of a child or child care problems	18.1
Health issue or family pressure	17.6
Conflict with the program, staff members, or other participants	15.8
Expulsion or being asked to leave	12.9
Another reason	32.5
<u>Among those who participated</u>	
Received a stipend from YouthBuild	86.3
Feel close to a YouthBuild staff person	84.0
Rated program, program component, or staff favorably ^a	
Overall YouthBuild experience	90.6
Construction or other job training	91.4
Counseling	86.4
Leadership training	88.0
Help finding a job	74.7
Help applying to college	81.3
Understanding your needs	81.4
Helping you solve problems	79.8
Helping you learn	86.7
Helping after you left YouthBuild	64.0
Staying in contact after you graduated	67.4
Sample size	1,811

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTE: ^aIndicates a response of "very good" or "good." The other response options were "okay," "poor," and "does not apply to me."

Appendix Table C.2
Impacts on Service Receipt at 30 Months

Outcome	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
<u>Education-related services</u>				
Ever participated (%)	81.2	69.8	11.4 ***	0.000
GED preparation	60.5	49.6	11.0 ***	0.000
Academic tutoring (not related to GED preparation)	22.7	13.0	9.6 ***	0.000
High school diploma prep courses	31.8	28.3	3.4 *	0.056
Standardized Achievement Test preparation	28.8	19.7	9.1 ***	0.000
College-preparation activities ^a	36.6	19.3	17.3 ***	0.000
Getting help finding financial aid	37.7	22.6	15.1 ***	0.000
Other ^b	15.2	13.5	1.8	0.233
Months participated	6.0	4.1	1.9 ***	0.000
<u>Job or training-related services</u>				
Ever participated (%)	78.2	57.8	20.4 ***	0.000
Job-skills training program	50.2	28.7	21.5 ***	0.000
On-the-job training in construction or another field	58.4	24.7	33.7 ***	0.000
Job certification program	37.4	17.3	20.1 ***	0.000
Job-search assistance ^c	63.2	44.7	18.5 ***	0.000
Help applying to a vocational training program ^d	40.4	22.3	18.1 ***	0.000
Months participated	6.2	3.1	3.1 ***	0.000
<u>Personal-development services</u>				
Ever participated (%)	65.6	44.4	21.1 ***	0.000
Help or advice from a mentor	44.0	26.1	17.9 ***	0.000
Life-skills training ^e	38.0	17.1	21.0 ***	0.000
Communication or public-speaking training	34.4	11.6	22.8 ***	0.000
Leadership-development training	43.4	14.9	28.4 ***	0.000
Health services	32.1	14.9	17.2 ***	0.000
Mental health services	23.0	11.7	11.3 ***	0.000
Working with a case manager	35.8	20.0	15.8 ***	0.000
Months participated	5.6	3.3	2.3 ***	0.000
Sample size (total = 2,808)	1,830	978		

(continued)

Appendix Table C.2 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aIncludes college-awareness or college-guidance activities, college-preparation or -transition programs, or preparation for college entrance exams.

^bIncludes attending adult education classes, various certification courses, and college attendance.

^cIncludes activities such as help filling out an application, writing a résumé, and going for an interview.

^dIncludes help with a program application or interview.

^eIncludes activities such as parenting-skills classes or learning how to balance a checkbook.

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Appendix D

Survey-Based Impacts and Subgroup Impacts at 12 Months and Selected Impacts Per Participant

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Appendix Table D.1
Impacts on Education and Training at 12 Months

Outcome (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Earned a high school diploma or GED credential	37.8	23.3	14.5***	0.000
High school diploma	11.7	12.1	-0.4	0.718
GED	26.1	11.3	14.9***	0.000
Enrolled in high school or GED classes since random assignment	64.3	54.9	9.4***	0.000
Enrolled in vocational school since random assignment ^a	25.9	14.9	11.0***	0.000
Received trade license/training certificate ^b	3.3	1.0	2.3***	0.002
Enrolled in postsecondary courses since random assignment	15.9	11.1	4.8***	0.001
2-year or community college	14.3	10.6	3.7***	0.007
4-year college or university	2.9	1.1	1.8***	0.004
Received a postsecondary degree	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.223
Associate's degree	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.548
Bachelor's degree	0.1	0.1	-0.1	0.562
Other degree	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.454
Currently enrolled in school	24.4	20.9	3.4**	0.043
GED prep or high school classes	14.2	14.6	-0.5	0.741
College courses	6.8	4.0	2.8***	0.004
Vocational or technical	6.4	4.6	1.9*	0.054
Other ^c	6.2	3.1	3.2***	0.000
Sample size (total = 2,845)	1,852	993		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

GED = General Educational Development.

^a"Vocational school" includes technical, business, and trade schools.

^b"Trade license/training certificate" includes technical, business, and trade certificates.

^c"Other" category includes enrollment in a regular or special education high school or a charter school.

Appendix Table D.2
Impacts on Youth Development at 12 Months

Outcome	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Civic engagement since random assignment (%)	86.4	75.7	10.6***	0.000
Volunteered	47.8	20.4	27.4***	0.000
Registered to vote ^a	76.3	71.5	4.8***	0.006
Voted	35.2	31.3	3.9**	0.038
Involved in politics or local community activities	10.9	7.2	3.7***	0.003
Currently happy (%)	76.6	75.2	1.4	0.418
What the future holds (%)				
Willing to wait for bigger financial rewards ^b	30.8	28.3	2.5	0.191
Will probably attend college ^c	83.4	81.7	1.7	
Expects to live at least 70 years	78.5	78.0	0.5	0.787
Exhibits signs of major depression ^d (%)	18.0	17.3	0.7	0.644
Overall good health (%)	84.5	82.8	1.7	0.267
Believes most people can be trusted (%)	23.2	21.5	1.7	0.328
Social support scale ^e	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.160
Self-esteem scale ^f	3.3	3.2	0.0*	0.097
Self-confidence scale ^g	3.0	2.9	0.0	0.180
Sample size (total = 2,845)	1,852	993		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aCurrently registered to vote at the time of the survey.

^bBased on responses to the question, "Would you rather get \$80 tomorrow or get \$100 three months from now?"

^cAmong those who have not attended and are not currently attending college.

^dDepression is measured using the PHQ-9, a nine-item scale used to diagnose depression in clinical settings. Response categories range from 0 = "not at all" to 3 = "nearly every day," where higher scores indicate more frequent occurrence of depression symptoms. If the item score sum is greater than or equal to 10, the respondent is considered to exhibit signs of major depression.

^eSocial support is measured using a six-item scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate stronger social support. The six items are averaged.

^fSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. The 10 items are averaged.

^gSelf-confidence is measured using a six-item scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-confidence. The six items are averaged.

Appendix Table D.3
Impacts on Employment and Earnings at 12 Months

Outcome	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Ever employed since random assignment (%)	54.5	55.9	-1.4	0.497
Currently employed (%)	33.2	31.7	1.4	0.455
Working full time (35+ hours/week)	15.2	15.4	-0.2	0.916
Self-employed	7.9	8.7	-0.8	0.475
Working through a temp agency	5.6	5.2	0.4	0.657
Earning \$10/hour or more	8.3	8.0	0.3	0.783
Average weekly earnings (\$)	92.3	90.2	2.1	0.777
Current job industry (%)				
Construction	2.2	2.8	-0.6	0.327
Retail trade	4.4	6.0	-1.7*	0.069
Admin./support/waste mgmt./remediation	3.9	3.7	0.2	0.807
Health care and social assistance	5.0	3.5	1.5*	0.088
Accommodation and food service	7.9	8.4	-0.5	0.647
Other	9.1	6.4	2.7**	0.018
Sample size (total = 2,845)	1,852	993		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTE: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

Appendix Table D.4

Impacts on Living Arrangements and Household Information at 12 Months

Outcome (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Current living arrangement				
Parent's home	52.6	56.1	-3.5*	0.072
Another person's home ^a	22.8	20.6	2.2	0.196
One's own place	19.7	17.0	2.7*	0.077
Incarceration facility	1.5	1.5	-0.1	0.876
Other arrangement ^b	3.4	4.8	-1.3*	0.097
Ever homeless since random assignment	16.4	16.5	-0.1	0.946
Married or living with spouse/partner	22.7	21.7	1.0	0.569
Receiving government benefits	72.0	70.3	1.7	0.361
Has children ^c	40.6	41.8	-1.3	0.375
Young parent ^d	7.3	7.5	-0.2	0.829
Lives with all or some of one's children	29.8	28.9	0.9	0.525
Has children but not custody	13.2	15.0	-1.8	0.167
Paid child support in the last 30 days	2.0	2.1	-0.1	0.810
Sample size (total = 2,845)	1,852	993		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

^aIncludes living with family other than parents.

^bIncludes living in a group home or halfway house, a long-term homeless shelter, or an emergency housing shelter (including for domestic violence); living on the street; situations such as college or residential training programs; and other situations.

^cIncludes a person's biological, adopted, foster, and stepchildren, plus any other children he or she is responsible for.

^d"Young parent" is defined here as a person under the age of 20 who is pregnant or who has a child.

Appendix Table D.5
Impacts on Delinquency and Risky Behavior at 12 Months

Outcome (%)	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value
Arrested	18.4	16.9	1.5	0.341
Charged	16.2	15.3	0.8	0.576
Convicted or found delinquent ^a	9.8	8.4	1.4	0.230
Drug offense	2.7	2.5	0.2	0.775
Driving under the influence	0.6	0.7	-0.1	0.713
Failure to pay child support	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.241
Property offense ^b	3.3	2.5	0.8	0.280
Violent offense ^c	1.8	1.3	0.5	0.357
Other	1.8	1.3	0.5	0.386
Ever locked up due to a sentence	5.1	3.9	1.2	0.167
Involved in a gang fight in the past 12 months	3.8	5.0	-1.2	0.161
Substance abuse				
Has 5+ drinks once or more in a typical week	30.0	29.0	1.0	0.606
Has used marijuana since random assignment	35.2	36.8	-1.5	0.429
Has used another drug since random assignment	8.6	6.5	2.0*	0.067
Drove a car while drinking or doing drugs in the last 30 days	5.7	5.2	0.6	0.558
Sample size (total = 2,845)	1,852	993		

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

All outcomes reflect activity since random assignment unless otherwise noted.

^aIn the juvenile justice system, the term "adjudicated delinquent" is used rather than "convicted."

^bProperty offenses include shoplifting, burglary, larceny, theft, auto theft, writing bad checks, fraud, forgery, arson, vandalism, and possession of stolen goods.

^cViolent offenses include physical or sexual assault, rape, robbery, manslaughter, attempted murder, and murder.

Appendix Table D.6

Impacts by Age at 12 Months

Outcome	Sample Members Under 20				Sample Members 20 and Older				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Ever participated in YouthBuild (%)	73.1	NA	NA		74.1	NA	NA		
Graduated from YouthBuild (%)	47.5	NA	NA		52.0	NA	NA		
Service receipt (%)									
Education-related	76.2	62.1	14.1***	0.000	73.9	52.4	21.4***	0.000	†
Job- or training-related	69.2	39.4	29.9***	0.000	72.6	39.4	33.2***	0.000	
Personal development	58.9	33.6	25.3***	0.000	60.0	29.0	31.0***	0.000	
Education (%)									
Earned a GED since random assignment	25.3	12.0	13.2***	0.000	27.1	10.6	16.5***	0.000	
Enrolled in college since random assignment (2- or 4-year)	14.0	9.6	4.5**	0.023	17.7	12.8	5.0**	0.020	
Youth development									
Civic engagement ^a (%)	83.5	70.5	13.0***	0.000	89.5	80.6	8.9***	0.000	
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.2	3.2	0.0	0.389	3.3	3.2	0.0	0.136	
Work (%)									
Currently employed	33.4	29.7	3.7	0.186	32.6	33.9	-1.3	0.622	
Earnings greater than \$10 per hour (%)	7.2	7.8	-0.7	0.673	9.3	8.4	0.9	0.580	

(continued)

Appendix Table D.6 (continued)

Outcome	Sample Members Under 20				Sample Members 20 and Older				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Involvement in the criminal justice system									
Arrested since random assignment (%)	20.3	17.2	3.1	0.180	16.1	16.7	-0.6	0.781	
Sample size	980	475			872	518			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The H-statistic is used to assess whether the difference between the subgroup impacts is statistically significant. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are indicated as: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

NA = not applicable.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, or being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

Appendix Table D.7

Impacts by Gender at 12 Months

Outcome	Women				Men				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Ever participated in YouthBuild (%)	72.9	NA	NA		74.1	NA	NA		
Graduated from YouthBuild (%)	44.3	NA	NA		52.8	NA	NA		
Service receipt (%)									
Education-related	75.4	60.4	15.0***	0.000	74.6	55.7	18.9***	0.000	
Job- or training-related	68.0	36.7	31.3***	0.000	72.9	40.3	32.6***	0.000	
Personal development	61.8	31.1	30.7***	0.000	58.3	30.9	27.4***	0.000	
Education (%)									
Earned a GED since random assignment	21.8	10.6	11.1***	0.000	28.8	11.8	16.9***	0.000	†
Enrolled in college since random assignment (2 or 4-year)	16.8	12.0	4.9*	0.052	15.1	11.1	4.0**	0.024	
Youth development									
Civic engagement ^a (%)	88.5	75.6	12.9***	0.000	84.9	76.0	8.9***	0.000	
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.2	3.3	0.0	0.860	3.3	3.2	0.1*	0.055	
Work (%)									
Currently employed	30.6	28.7	1.9	0.560	34.8	33.6	1.3	0.611	
Earnings greater than \$10 per hour (%)	5.9	5.2	0.7	0.668	9.7	9.7	0.0	0.984	

(continued)

Appendix Table D.7 (continued)

Outcome	Women				Men				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Involvement in the criminal justice system									
Arrested since random assignment (%)	11.8	9.2	2.6	0.241	22.1	22.2	0.0	0.988	
Sample size	697	366			1,152	627			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The H-statistic is used to assess whether the difference between the subgroup impacts is statistically significant. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are indicated as: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

NA = not applicable.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, or being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

Appendix Table D.8

Impacts by Highest Grade Previously Completed, at 12 Months

Outcome	Sample Members Who Had Completed Less Than Tenth Grade				Sample Members Who Had Completed Tenth Grade or Higher				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Ever participated in YouthBuild (%)	74.7	NA	NA		72.6	NA	NA		
Graduated from YouthBuild (%)	51.0	NA	NA		47.6	NA	NA		
Service receipt (%)									
Education-related	77.5	60.0	17.5***	0.000	72.7	54.9	17.8***	0.000	
Job- or training-related	72.1	37.3	34.8***	0.000	69.6	41.6	27.9***	0.000	†
Personal development	60.9	32.0	28.9***	0.000	57.9	30.1	27.7***	0.000	
Education (%)									
Earned a GED since random assignment	27.5	10.4	17.1***	0.000	24.2	10.2	14.0***	0.000	
Enrolled in college since random assignment (2- or 4-year)	14.0	8.1	5.9***	0.001	17.8	13.8	3.9*	0.084	
Youth development									
Civic engagement ^a (%)	84.0	71.5	12.5***	0.000	88.9	80.8	8.0***	0.000	
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.2	3.2	0.0	0.938	3.3	3.2	0.1**	0.013	†
Work									
Currently employed (%)	31.6	28.4	3.2	0.223	34.7	36.0	-1.3	0.668	
Earnings greater than \$10 per hour (%)	7.0	7.9	-0.8	0.587	9.7	8.4	1.3	0.475	

(continued)

Appendix Table D.8 (continued)

Outcome	Sample Members Who Had Completed Less Than Tenth Grade				Sample Members Who Had Completed Tenth Grade or Higher				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Involvement in the criminal justice system									
Arrested since random assignment (%)	18.7	18.5	0.1	0.960	17.6	15.8	1.8	0.437	
Sample size	1,005	525			821	456			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The H-statistic is used to assess whether the difference between the subgroup impacts is statistically significant. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are indicated as: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

NA = not applicable.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, or being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

Appendix Table D.9

Impacts by Program Fidelity, at 12 Months

Outcome	Sample Members from Programs with Low Fidelity				Sample Members from Programs with High Fidelity				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Ever participated in YouthBuild (%)	68.7	NA	NA		76.7	NA	NA		
Graduated from YouthBuild (%)	55.8	NA	NA		46.0	NA	NA		
Service receipt (%)									
Education-related	75.6	59.7	16.0***	0.000	74.8	55.7	19.1***	0.000	
Job- or training-related	69.1	44.0	25.1***	0.000	72.0	35.7	36.3***	0.000	†††
Personal development	57.1	33.0	24.0***	0.000	61.1	29.7	31.3***	0.000	†
Education (%)									
Earned a GED since random assignment	28.5	12.3	16.2***	0.000	24.2	11.2	13.0***	0.000	
Enrolled in college since random assignment (2- or 4-year)	19.5	13.1	6.5***	0.007	13.6	9.7	3.9**	0.028	
Youth development									
Civic engagement ^a (%)	87.2	76.5	10.7***	0.000	86.0	75.4	10.6***	0.000	
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.3	3.2	0.1*	0.082	3.3	3.2	0.0	0.488	
Work									
Currently employed (%)	31.6	32.5	-0.9	0.757	33.9	31.1	2.8	0.271	
Earnings greater than \$10 per hour (%)	10.4	8.0	2.4	0.207	7.2	7.3	-0.1	0.971	

(continued)

Appendix Table D.9 (continued)

Outcome	Sample Members from Programs with Low Fidelity				Sample Members from Programs with High Fidelity				Difference Between Subgroup Impacts
	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	Program Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	P-Value	
Involvement in the criminal justice system									
Arrested since random assignment (%)	18.0	14.7	3.2	0.177	18.5	18.5	0.0	0.989	
Sample size	723	428			1,129	565			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 12-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

The H-statistic is used to assess whether the difference between the subgroup impacts is statistically significant. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are indicated as: ††† = 1 percent; †† = 5 percent; † = 10 percent.

NA = not applicable.

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, or being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

Appendix Table D.10

Impacts Per Participant for Selected Outcomes

Outcome	YouthBuild Group	Control Group	Difference (Impact)	Impact Per Participant
<u>Education and training (%)</u>				
Earned a GED	31.2	17.5	13.7	18.5 ***
Enrolled in vocational school	30.8	20.4	10.3	14.0 ***
Received a trade license/training certificate	4.1	2.1	2.0	2.7 **
Enrolled in postsecondary courses	23.6	18.1	5.6	7.5 ***
<u>Work and earnings</u>				
Employed at Month 30 (%)	44.4	44.8	-0.4	-0.5
Average weekly earnings (\$)	150.2	134.5	15.7	21.2 *
<u>Youth development</u>				
Civic engagement ^a (%)	92.2	88.6	3.6	4.8 ***
Self-esteem scale ^b	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.0
<u>Criminal justice involvement</u>				
Arrested since random assignment	27.6	26.4	1.3	1.7
Convicted since random assignment	15.7	14.1	1.6	2.2
Sample size (total = 2,808)	1,830	978		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on responses to the 30-month survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

"Impact per participant" refers to the difference between the program and control group means divided by the participation rate (0.74).

^a"Civic engagement" covers volunteering, being registered to vote at the time of the survey, having voted, and being involved in politics or local community services.

^bSelf-esteem is measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. Response categories range from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree," where higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Responses to the 10 items are averaged.

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