

Year Up

Intervention Report | Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Topic Area

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE™

November 2021

WWC 2022-002
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Publication of the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

There is a growing divide between career opportunities for college graduates and those for young adults without postsecondary credentials.¹ Young adults with no more than a high school credential earned 34 percent less than college graduates in 1980, 57 percent less in 1990, 71 percent less in 2000, and 78 percent less in 2015.² Rising employer demand for skilled workers has driven efforts to better align occupational training programs to industry needs.³ *Year Up* is an occupational and technical education intervention that targets high school graduates to provide them with six months of training in the information technology and financial service sectors followed by a six-month internship

and supports to ensure that participants have strong connections to employment.⁴

This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC’s Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area, explores the effects of *Year Up* on short- and medium-term earnings and employment and on industry-recognized credential completion. The WWC identified two studies of *Year Up*. Both meet WWC standards.⁵ The evidence presented in this report is from studies of the impact of *Year Up* on young adults ages 18 to 24 with a high school diploma or equivalent—including Black and Hispanic individuals—in urban areas around the country.

What Happens When Students Participate in *Year Up*?⁶

The evidence indicates that implementing *Year Up*:

- is likely to increase short-term earnings
- may result in little to no change in short-term employment
- may result in little to no change in medium-term earnings
- may result in little to no change in industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion
- may result in little to no change in medium-term employment

Findings on *Year Up* from two studies that meet WWC standards are shown in Table 1. The table reports an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention’s effect on an outcome. It can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention.

Table 1. Summary of findings on *Year Up* from studies that meet WWC standards

Outcome domain	Effectiveness rating	Study findings	Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 4.0)	
		Improvement index (percentile points)	Number of studies	Number of students
Short-term earnings	Positive effects	+28	2	1,988
Short-term employment	No discernible effects	+7	1	143
Medium-term earnings	No discernible effects	+5	1	135
Industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion	No discernible effects	+2	1	143
Medium-term employment	No discernible effects	-1	1	143

Note: The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +28 means that the expected percentile rank of the average comparison group student would increase by 28 points if the student received *Year Up*. The improvement index values are generated by averaging findings from the outcome analyses that meet WWC standards within each of the respective domains, as reported by Fein & Hamadyk (2018) and Roder & Elliott (2014). A positive improvement index does not necessarily mean the estimated effect is statistically significant. The short-term earnings outcomes reported in these studies include working in a job paying \$15/hour or more six months after program completion and average and annual earnings one year after program completion. Short-term employment outcomes reported in these studies include employed and average number of hours worked one year after program completion. Medium-term earnings outcomes reported in these studies include average annual earnings three years after program completion. Industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion outcomes reported in these studies includes earned a vocational certificate three years after program completion. Medium-term employment outcomes reported in these studies include employed and average number of hours worked three years after program completion. The effects of *Year Up* are not known for other outcomes within the Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area protocol, including credit accumulation, postsecondary degree attainment, technical skill proficiency, long-term employment, and long-term earnings.

BOX 1. HOW THE WWC REVIEWS AND DESCRIBES EVIDENCE

The WWC evaluates evidence based on the quality and results of reviewed studies. The criteria the WWC uses for evaluating evidence are defined in the [Procedures and Standards Handbooks](#) and the [Review Protocols](#). The studies summarized in this report were reviewed under WWC Standards (version 4.0) and the Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area protocol (version 4.0).

To determine the effectiveness rating, the WWC considers what methods each study used, the direction of the effects, and the number of studies that tested the intervention. The higher the effectiveness rating, the more certain the WWC is about the reported results and about what will happen if the same intervention is implemented again. The following key explains the relationship between effectiveness ratings and the statements used in this report:

Effectiveness rating	Rating interpretation	Description of the evidence
Positive (or negative) effects	The intervention is <i>likely</i> to change an outcome	Strong evidence of a positive (or negative) effect, with no overriding contrary evidence
Potentially positive (or negative) effects	The intervention <i>may</i> change an outcome	Evidence of a positive effect (or negative) with no overriding contrary evidence
No discernible effects	The intervention <i>may result in little to no change</i> in an outcome	No affirmative evidence of effects
Mixed effects	The intervention <i>has inconsistent effects</i> on an outcome	Evidence includes studies in at least two of these categories: studies with positive effects, studies with negative effects, or more studies with indeterminate effects than with positive or negative effects

How is *Year Up* Implemented?

The following section provides details of how the core *Year Up* program was implemented. This information can help educators identify the requirements for implementing *Year Up* and determine whether implementing this intervention would be feasible in their communities. *Year Up* has also implemented several variants on its core model, including a version co-located with local colleges and versions that are shorter in duration. Information on *Year Up* presented in this section comes from the studies that meet WWC standards (Fein & Hamadyk, 2018 and Roder & Elliott, 2014) and from correspondence with the developer.

- **Goal:** *Year Up* aims to close the opportunity divide by ensuring that young adults gain the skills, experiences, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through careers and higher education.
- **Target population:** *Year Up* is designed for low-income young adults ages 18 to 24 with a high school diploma or equivalent.
- **Method of delivery:** *Year Up* enrolls students in small learning communities of about 40 students. The program is structured around six months of full-time occupational and technical training followed by a six-month internship in the information technology or financial services sectors. The training is delivered face-to-face and involves work-based learning opportunities. For the internships, students are placed in entry-level positions at local employers in target occupational fields.

Comparison group: In the two studies that contribute to this intervention report, students in the comparison group did not have access to *Year Up*, but they could engage in other job training programs or postsecondary education opportunities. In one of the two studies (Roder & Elliott, 2014), members of the comparison group were able to reapply for the program 10 months after their initial application.

- **Frequency and duration of service:** During the six-month formal training phase, students attend full-time occupational and technical training for four and a half days a week. Students are then placed in six-month internships with local companies in their selected occupational fields. Throughout the program, Wednesday afternoons are dedicated to reflective sessions and workshops. Students also receive extensive supports, including advising, mentoring, instructional support, and financial assistance throughout. Post-program services support students with job search and placement for up to four months after program completion.
- **Intervention components:** The core *Year Up* model includes intake recruitment and assessment, a learning community, occupational and technical training, an internship, a stipend, and various other program and post-program supports. Refer to Table 2 for additional details.

Table 2. Components of *Year Up*

Key component	Description
Intake recruitment and assessment	The intake process involves an intensive, multi-stage assessment and screening, including a background and drug test, learning assessment, and one-on-one interviews.
Learning community	Students are grouped in learning communities of about 40 students that are facilitated by a designated staff member. Within each learning community, students engage in group activities and events designed to build trust and cohesion, active engagement in program activities, and collaboration.
Occupational and technical training	The formal training phase of the <i>Year Up</i> program involves six months of full-time occupational and technical training. The training focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical skills in specified occupational tracks (e.g., information technology, finance, quality assurance, project management, and customer service), • business communications (e.g., writing and public speaking), and • general skills related to functioning effectively in workplace environments (e.g., business etiquette and workplace relationship skills). The training classes are structured to meet the requirements of the program's college partners so that students can earn college credit for the completion of classes.
Internship	Students are placed in six-month internships with companies in the student's selected occupational field.
Workshops	Weekly workshops and reflective sessions offer students the opportunity to process and discuss their experiences as they progress through the program. Towards the end of the program, these activities emphasize career planning, resume development, and job search.
Instructional supports	Tutoring and other instructional assistance is provided to students who need additional academic help.
Advising	Students are assigned an advisor at the start of the program. The role of the advisor is to monitor the student's progress and support the student with any challenges or problems the student encounters. Advisors meet weekly with their students. Each advisor is assigned four to eight students.
Mentoring	Students are also paired with an external mentor from the local business community. The role of the mentor is to provide insights to the student's occupational field of interest, as well as to help students meet and network with relevant employers and working professionals.
Social services	Students have access to trained social workers and mental health professionals through <i>Year Up</i> 's Student Services staff. Service coordinators facilitate student access to other community-based providers for more specialized services, such as housing, childcare, legal advice, medical insurance and care, and help accessing public benefits.
Stipend	The training and services are provided at no cost to the students. <i>Year Up</i> provides all students with weekly stipends (around \$150 during the training and \$200 during the internship phase). The weekly stipend amount is contingent on compliance with and progress in the program.
Post-program supports	<i>Year Up</i> 's local teams assist graduates with job search and placement up to four months after program completion, including job fairs, one-on-one career guidance, and resume development. This support extends to one year after the program when <i>Year Up</i> reconnects with alumni to collect 12-month employment outcomes. Additionally, <i>Year Up</i> graduates have lifelong access to a national alumni association that provides free ongoing career, education, and family supports, as well as a talent placement firm, Year Up Professional Resources (YUPRO), a private beneficiary corporation dedicated exclusively to <i>Year Up</i> graduates.

What Does *Year Up* Cost?

This preliminary list of costs is not designed to be exhaustive; rather, it provides educators an overview of the major resources needed to implement *Year Up*. The program costs described in Table 3 are based on the information available as of 2014.

As reported in Fein & Hamadyk (2018), the average cost of *Year Up* was \$28,290 per student. Local *Year Up* staff accounted for 46 percent of the costs; student stipends

accounted for 23 percent; program, fundraising, and administrative costs accounted for 20 percent; and the national office cost accounted for 11 percent. The operating costs of *Year Up* are primarily financed by employer payments for interns (59 percent), foundation grants (22 percent), and charitable donations from private companies and individuals (17 percent). Public funds accounted for less than two percent of the operating costs.

Table 3. Cost ingredients for *Year Up*

Cost ingredients	Description	Source of funding
Personnel	<i>Year Up</i> instructors, advisors, social workers, and other support staff work with students throughout the program.	<i>Year Up</i>
Facilities	A national office in Boston provides operations and implementation support and facilitates sharing experiences and lessons learned across sites. Additionally, local <i>Year Up</i> offices are located in urban areas around the country.	<i>Year Up</i>

Key component	Description	Source of funding
Equipment and materials	All materials required for the training phase are provided by <i>Year Up</i> . Materials and equipment required for internship are provided by internship employers.	<i>Year Up</i> and internship employers
Direct assistance	Weekly stipends of around \$150 during the training and \$200 during the internship phase are provided to students.	<i>Year Up</i> and internship employers
Other	Local <i>Year Up</i> offices are responsible for fundraising to cover operating expenses, including staff salaries, rent, and other administrative costs.	<i>Year Up</i>

For More Information:

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About the cost of the intervention

Fein, D., & Hamadyk, J. (2018). *Bridging the opportunity divide for low-income youth: implementation and early impacts of the Year Up program*. (OPRE Report No. 2018-65). Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/pace_8_year_up_narrative_6_1_18_508.pdf

Research Summary

The WWC identified two studies that investigated the effectiveness of *Year Up* (Figure 1):

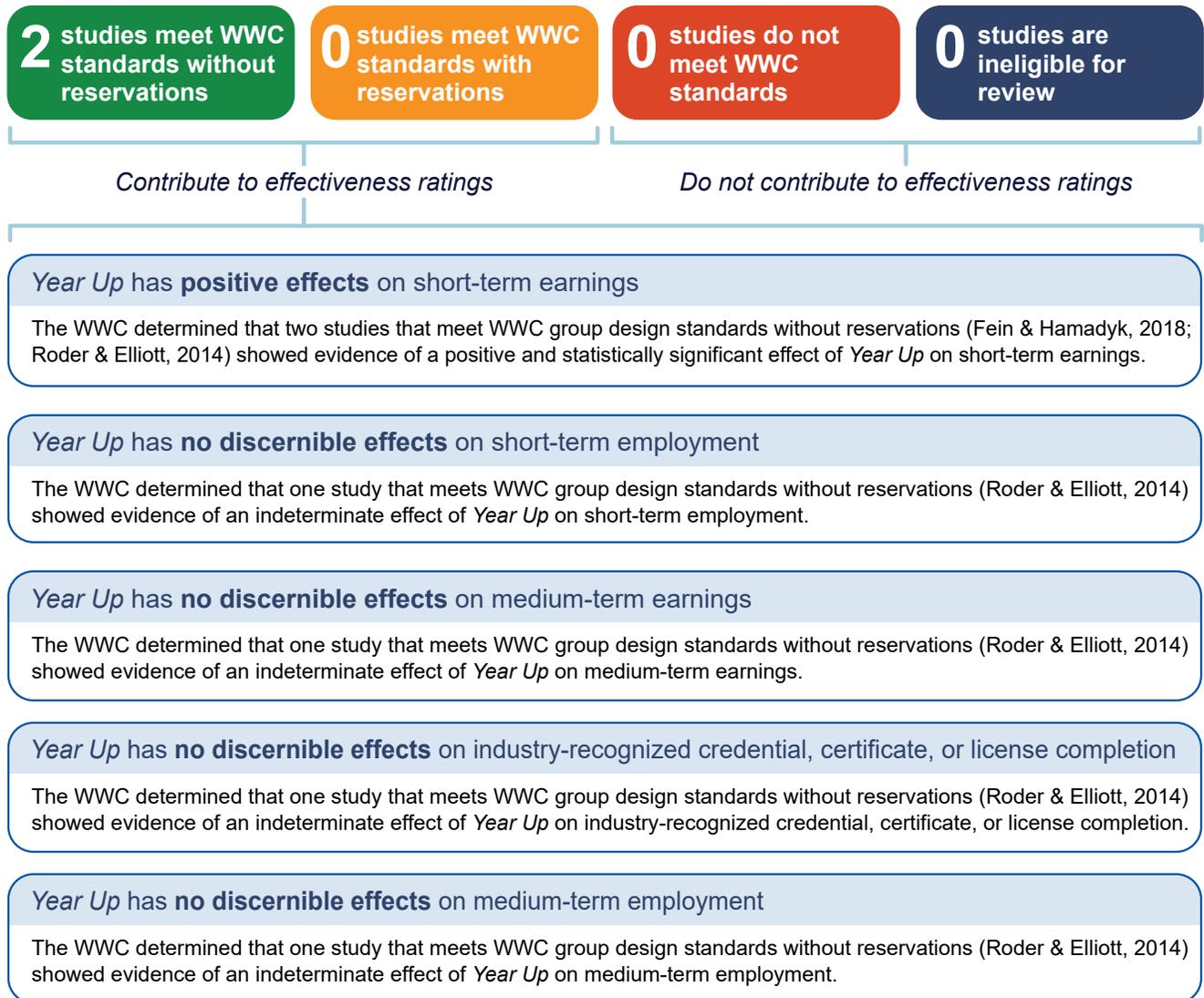
- Both studies meet WWC group design standards without reservations.

The WWC reviews findings on the intervention's effects on eligible outcome domains from studies that meet standards, either with or without reservations. Based on this review, the WWC generates an effectiveness rating, which summarizes how the intervention impacts, or changes, a particular outcome domain. The WWC reports additional supplemental findings, such as employment directly after program completion, on the WWC website (<https://whatworks.ed.gov>).

These supplemental findings and findings from studies that either do not meet WWC standards or are ineligible for review do not contribute to the effectiveness ratings.

The two studies of *Year Up* that meet WWC group design standards reported findings on short- and medium-term employment, short- and medium-term earnings, and industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion. No other findings in the studies meet WWC design standards within any outcome domain included in the Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area.⁷ Citations for the two studies reviewed for this report are listed in the References section, which begins on page 11.

Figure 1. Effectiveness ratings for *Year Up*



Main Findings

Table 4 shows the findings from the two *Year Up* studies that meet WWC standards. The table includes WWC calculations of the mean difference, effect size, and performance of the intervention group relative to the comparison group. Based on findings from the two studies that meet WWC standards, the effectiveness rating for short-term earnings is *positive effects*, indicating strong evidence of a positive effect, with no overriding contrary evidence. These findings are based on 1,988 students.

Based on findings from one study that meets WWC standards, the effectiveness rating for short- and medium-term employment, medium-term earnings, and industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion is *no discernible effects*, indicating no affirmative evidence of effects. These findings are based on between 135 and 143 students.

Table 4. Findings by outcome domain from studies of *Year Up* that meet WWC standards

Measure (study)	Study sample	Sample size	Mean (standard deviation)		WWC calculations			p-value
			Intervention group	Comparison group	Mean difference	Effect size	Improvement index	
Working in a job paying \$15/hour or more 6 months after program completion (%) (Fein & Hamadyk, 2018) ^a	Full sample	1,859	46.46	14.26	32.20	1.00	+34	<0.01
Average annual earnings 1 year after program completion (\$) (Roder & Elliott, 2014) ^b	Full sample	129	16,590 (13,135)	10,086 (10,043)	6,504	0.52	+20	0.01
Outcome average for short-term earnings across both studies						0.76	+28	Statistically significant
Employed 1 year after program completion (%)	Full sample	143	75	68	7	0.21	+8	0.40
Average number of hours worked 1 year after program completion	Full sample	135	1,202 (798)	1,096 (926)	106	0.13	+5	0.51
Outcome average for short-term employment (Roder & Elliott, 2014)^b						0.17	+7	Not statistically significant
Average annual earnings 3 years after program completion (\$)	Full sample	135	19,191 (14,670)	17,257 (12,884)	1,934	0.14	+5	0.48
Outcome average for medium-term earnings (Roder & Elliott, 2014)^b						0.14	+5	Not statistically significant
Earned a vocational certificate 3 years after program completion (%)	Full sample	143	27	25	2	0.06	+2	0.81
Outcome average for industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion (Roder & Elliott, 2014)^b						0.06	+2	Not statistically significant
Employed 3 years after program completion (%)	Full sample	143	82	80	2	0.08	+3	0.78
Average number of hours worked 3 years after program completion	Full sample	143	1,373 (869)	1,469 (865)	-96	-0.11	-4	0.55
Outcome average for medium-term employment (Roder & Elliott, 2014)^b						-0.02	-1	Not statistically significant

Notes: For mean difference and effect size values reported in the table, a positive number favors the intervention group and a negative number favors the comparison group. The effect size is a standardized measure of the effect of an intervention on outcomes, representing the average change expected for all individuals who are given the intervention (measured in standard deviations of the outcome measure). An indicator of the effect of the intervention, the improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +28 means that the expected percentile rank of the average comparison group student would increase by 28 points if the student received *Year Up*. A positive improvement index does not necessarily mean the estimated effect is statistically significant. Some statistics may not sum as expected due to rounding.

^a The adjusted means presented here for Fein & Hamadyk (2018) were provided in response to an author query. The p-values and effect sizes presented here were calculated by the WWC because the specific values were not reported in the response to the author query. This study is characterized as having a statistically significant positive effect on short-term earnings because the estimated effect is positive and statistically significant.

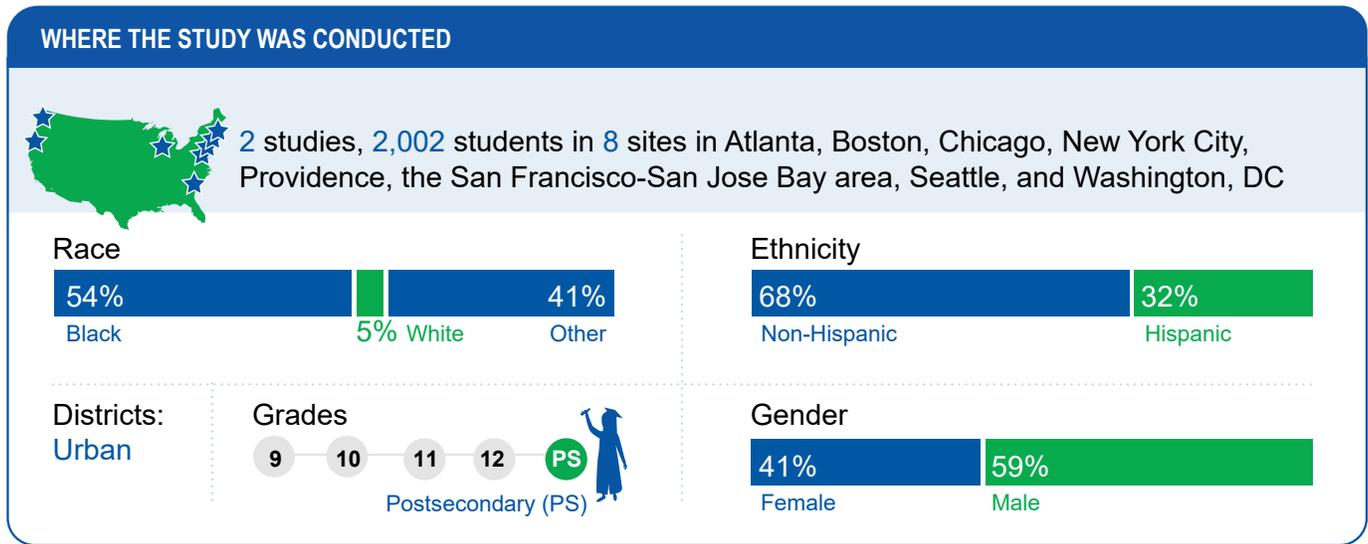
^b Roder & Elliott (2014) required a correction for multiple comparisons in the short-term and medium-term employment domains, but this correction did not affect whether any of the contrasts were found to be statistically significant. The analytic sample sizes and standard deviations for the average annual earnings after one and three years and for the number of hours worked after one and three years presented here were provided in response to an author query. The p-values presented here were calculated by the WWC because the specific p-values were not reported in the study. The study is characterized as having a positive effect on short-term earnings because the main effects are statistically significant. The study is characterized as having an indeterminate effect on short-term employment, medium-term earnings, industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion, and medium-term employment because the mean effects are not statistically significant.

For more information, please refer to the WWC Procedures Handbook, version 4.0, page 22.

In What Context Was Year Up Studied?

The following section provides information on the setting of the two studies of *Year Up* that meet WWC standards, and a description of the participants in the research.

This information can help educators understand the context in which the studies of *Year Up* were conducted, and determine whether the program might be suitable for their setting.



Details of Each Study that Meets WWC Standards

This section presents details for the studies of *Year Up* that meet WWC standards. These details include the full study reference, findings description, findings summary, and description of study characteristics. A summary of domain findings for each study is presented below, followed by a description of the study characteristics. These study-level details include contextual information about the study setting, methods, sample, intervention group, comparison group, outcomes, and implementation details. For additional information, readers should refer to the original studies.

Research details for Fein & Hamadyk (2018)

Fein, D., & Hamadyk, J. (2018). *Bridging the opportunity divide for low-income youth: implementation and early impacts of the Year Up program*. (OPRE Report No. 2018-65). Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/pace_8_year_up_narrative_6_1_18_508.pdf

Findings from Fein & Hamadyk (2018) show evidence of a statistically significant positive effect of *Year Up* in the short-term earnings domain (Table 5). This finding is based on an outcome analysis that includes 1,859 students.

Table 5. Summary of findings from Fein & Hamadyk (2018)

Outcome domain	Sample size	Meets WWC Group Design Standards Without Reservations		
		Average effect size	Improvement index	Statistically significant
Short-term earnings	1,859 students	1.00	+34	Yes

Table 6. Description of study characteristics for Fein & Hamadyk (2018)

WWC evidence rating	Meets WWC Group Design Without Reservations. This is a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with low attrition. For more information on how the WWC assigns study ratings, please see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbooks (version 4.0) and WWC Standards Briefs , available on the WWC website.
Setting	The <i>Year Up</i> program was delivered in eight metropolitan areas (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, New York, Providence, the San Francisco-San Jose Bay area, Seattle, and Washington, DC). The program was delivered from a single central location in each city except for the two Bay Area offices.
Methods	<i>Year Up</i> offices in the eight metropolitan areas recruited, screened, and randomly assigned 2,544 young adults to intervention (1,669) and comparison (875) groups. Before random assignment occurred, all participants completed a baseline information form to provide demographic and economic information and a self-administered questionnaire that measured participants' attitudes, beliefs, psycho-social dispositions, criminal background, and financial security. Impact data were analyzed using an intent-to-treat framework. The analytic sample for the one eligible outcome had 1,242 participants in the intervention group and 617 participants in the comparison group. The sample loss after random assignment (attrition) was within the acceptable threshold for the review: the overall attrition rate was 27%, and differential attrition rate was 4 percentage points.
Study sample	Over half of participants were male (59%) and 21 to 24 years old (57%); the remaining were female (41%) and 18 to 20 years old (43%). Over half of the participants (54%) were Black, non-Hispanic, 6% were White, non-Hispanic, and 9% were another race, non-Hispanic. About one-third (31%) were Hispanic. Additionally, 99% had a high school diploma and 3% had an Associate's degree or higher. The mean family income was \$27,021.
Intervention group	<i>Year Up</i> participants receive six months of technical skills training geared at meeting the needs of the corporate partners of the program. All participants receive training in operating systems and software for word processing and learn how to use spreadsheets and create presentations. There are separate tracks for information technology, business communications, and financial operations with relevant specialized skills. The program also has college partners so participants can earn college credits for satisfactory completion of the classes they take. Following the six months of training, participants have six-month internships with corporate partners that are major corporations in the region. Throughout the experience, general professionalism is emphasized, including regular attendance, professional demeanor, timeliness, diligence (completion of work), appropriate attire, networking, and conflict management. Participants also receive a stipend (per a performance contract) and have staff advisors, social workers, peer support opportunities, and are paired with a mentor from outside the program. There is also some flexibility for sites to customize their curriculum based on local considerations.
Comparison group	Comparison group members were subject to a three-year embargo on <i>Year Up</i> participation but could receive other training and supports in the community. Each of the metropolitan areas offered alternative employment and training services that the comparison group could access. These included training at community and technical colleges, for-profit postsecondary institutions, and non-profit training providers. Examples include Job Corps, Per Scholas, Jewish Vocational Services, Center on Employment and Training, and Goodwill Industries. The study notes that many training providers offer job readiness and job placement services in conjunction with technical skills training. Others offer mentoring in the business community.
Outcomes and measurement	Study authors reported findings on one outcome measure that is eligible for review under the Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area and that meets WWC group design standards. The eligible outcome was working in a job paying \$15/hour or more 6 months after program completion (short-term earnings domain). Authors also reported findings for employment, average quarterly earnings, average weekly hours, and receipt of a postsecondary credential or an industry certifications and license, but these outcomes did not meet WWC group design standards since the author imputed data using a hot deck approach, which is an unacceptable form of imputation according to WWC standards. Authors reported on two ineligible outcomes, including working in a job requiring at least mid-level skills and working in a <i>Year Up</i> target occupation.
Additional implementation details	<i>Year Up</i> receives funding from employer payments for interns; foundation grants; donations from companies and individuals; and, to a small degree, government agencies. Further, a national team supports local offices with operations, sharing information across offices, and overall implementation.

Research details for Roder & Elliott (2014)

Roder, A., & Elliot, M. (2014). *Sustained gains: Year Up's continued impact on young adults' earnings*. New York: Economic Mobility Corporation.

<https://economicmobilitycorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Sustained-Gains-Summary.pdf>

Findings from Roder & Elliott (2014) show evidence of a statistically significant positive effect of *Year Up* on short-term earnings (Table 7). This finding is based on an

outcome analysis that includes 129 students. The findings on short-term employment; medium-term earnings; industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion; and medium-term employment, which all show evidence of indeterminate effects, are based on outcome analyses that include 135 to 143 students. The findings and research details summarized for this study come from two related citations, including the primary study listed. See the References section, which begins on page 11, for a list of all related publications.

Table 7. Summary of findings from Roder & Elliott (2014)

		Meets WWC Group Design Standards Without Reservations		
		Study findings		
Outcome domain	Sample size	Average effect size	Improvement index	Statistically significant
Short-term earnings	129 students	0.52	+20	Yes
Short-term employment	139 students	0.17	+7	No
Medium-term earnings	135 students	0.14	+5	No
Industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion	143 students	0.06	+2	No
Medium-term employment	143 students	-0.02	-1	No

Table 8. Description of study characteristics for Roder & Elliott (2014)

WWC evidence rating	Meets WWC Group Design Without Reservations. This is a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with low attrition.
Setting	The study was conducted in three northeastern cities: Boston, New York, and Providence, Rhode Island. The first six months of the program consisted of technical training in classroom settings, while the second six months were on-the-job training in employer partner internship sites.
Methods	One hundred and ninety-five participants were randomly assigned to either the <i>Year Up</i> group (135 participants) or a comparison group (60 participants). Members of the comparison group were eligible to reapply to the program after 10 months, and 29 percent of the comparison group members in the final sample did participate in <i>Year Up</i> during the second and third years after random assignment. Findings are based on group assigned, regardless of whether or not they attended the program, which represents the average effect of the intent to treat. The sample loss after random assignment (attrition) was within the acceptable threshold for the review: the overall attrition rate was between 27% and 34%, and differential attrition rate was between 4 and 7 percentage points.
Study sample	Over half (52%) of the participants were Black, 2% were White, 4% were Asian, 8% were "other," and 34% were unknown/unreported. Over one-third (34%) were Hispanic/Latino and 66% were non-Hispanic/non-Latino. Additionally, 89% had a high school diploma (11% had earned a GED) and 90% had worked for pay prior to participating in <i>Year Up</i> . Just over half (56%) had held their longest job for less than one year. Over half (54%) were male (46% female), and over three-fourths (76%) were between ages 18 and 21. Nearly one-fifth (17%) lived in public housing, and the primary language of 16 percent of participants was not English. Only 10% of participants were not U.S. citizens.
Intervention group	<i>Year Up</i> participants receive six months of technical skills training geared at meeting the needs of the corporate partners of the program. All participants receive training in operating systems and software for word processing and learn how to use spreadsheets and create presentations. There are separate tracks for information technology, business communications, and financial operations with relevant specialized skills. The program also has college partners so that participants can earn college credits for satisfactory completion of the classes they take. Following the six months of training, participants have six-month internships with corporate partners that are major corporations in the region. Throughout the experience, general professionalism is emphasized, including regular attendance, professional demeanor, timeliness, diligence (completion of work), appropriate attire, networking, and conflict management. Participants also receive a stipend (per a performance contract) and have staff advisors, social workers, peer support opportunities, and are paired with a mentor from outside the program. There is also some flexibility for sites to customize their curriculum based on local considerations.

<p>Comparison group</p>	<p>Members of the comparison group could engage in other job training programs or postsecondary education opportunities. Individuals randomly assigned to the comparison group were told that they were on a waiting list and could reapply after 10 months. A total of 29 percent of the comparison group members applied to participate in the <i>Year Up</i> intervention during the second and third years following randomization.</p>
<p>Outcomes and measurement</p>	<p>Study authors reported findings on seven outcome measures that are eligible for review under the Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area. Two eligible outcomes, employment and average number of hours worked one year after program completion, were in the short-term employment domain. Two eligible outcomes, employment and average number of hours worked three years after program completion, were in the medium-term employment domain. One eligible outcome, average annual earnings one year after program completion, was in the short-term earnings domain. One eligible outcome, average annual earnings three year after program completion, was in the medium-term earnings domain. One eligible outcome, earning a vocational certificate, was in the industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license completion domain.</p> <p>The study also reported findings for employment directly after random assignment, directly after program completion, and two years after program completion, and on hours worked and average annual earnings directly after program completion and two years after program completion. The time periods at which these outcomes were measured do not align with the WWC's preferred measurement points for short- and medium-term employment and earnings outcomes. Summaries of these findings are available on the WWC website (https://whatworks.ed.gov). The supplemental findings do not factor into the intervention's rating of effectiveness.</p> <p>The study also reported on the percent of participants attending college each quarter after random assignment, but this was not eligible for review under the Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area.</p>
<p>Additional implementation details</p>	<p>Additional information is not available about the implementation of the <i>Year Up</i> intervention.</p>

References

Studies that meet WWC group design standards

Fein, D., & Hamadyk, J. (2018). *Bridging the opportunity divide for low-income youth: implementation and early impacts of the Year Up program*. (OPRE Report No. 2018-65). Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/pace_8_year_up_narrative_6_1_18_508.pdf

Roder, A., & Elliot, M. (2014). *Sustained gains: Year Up's continued impact on young adults' earnings*. New York: Economic Mobility Corporation. <https://economicmobilitycorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Sustained-Gains-Summary.pdf>

Additional sources:

Roder, A., & Elliot, M. (2011). *A promising start. Year Up's initial impacts on low-income young adults' careers*. New York: Economic Mobility Corporation. <http://www.buildingbetterprograms.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Year-Up-EMC-Study.pdf>

Studies that meet WWC group design standards with reservations

None

Studies that do not meet WWC group design standards

None

Studies that are ineligible for review using the Career and Technical Education Protocol

None

Endnotes

¹ Belfield, C. R., Levin, H. M., & Rosen, R. (2012). *The economic value of opportunity youth*. New York, NY: Corporation for National and Community Service. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED528650>

² Valletta, R. G. (2016). *Recent flattening in the higher education wage premium: Polarization, skill downgrading, or both?* (NBER Working Paper No. 22935). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

³ Carnevale, A. P., Cheah, B., Ridley, N., & Strohl, J. (2017). *Good jobs that pay without a BA*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce.

⁴ The descriptive information for this intervention comes from Roder & Elliott (2014) and Fein & Hamadyk (2018). The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) requests developers review the intervention description sections for accuracy from their perspective. The WWC provided the developer with the intervention description in April 2021 and the WWC incorporated feedback from the developer. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this intervention is beyond the scope of this review.

⁵ Absence of conflict of interest: This intervention report includes one study conducted by staff from Abt Associates (Fein & Hamadyk, 2018). Because Abt Associates is a contractor that administers the WWC, the study was reviewed by staff members from a different organization.

⁶ The literature search reflects documents publicly available by April 2021. Reviews of the studies in this report used the standards from the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (version 4.0) and the Postsecondary Career and Technical Education review protocol (version 4.0). The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions could change as new research becomes available. A longer-term impacts report for the Fein & Hamadyk (2018) study was published in May 2021, too late to be included in this intervention report. Findings are broadly consistent with the early impacts report. The longer-term impacts report may be viewed here: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/still-bridging-opportunity-divide-low-income-youth-year-ups-longer-term-impacts>.

⁷ The effects of *Year Up* are not known for other outcome domains within the Postsecondary Career and Technical Education topic area, including credit accumulation, postsecondary degree attainment, technical skill proficiency, long-term employment, and long-term earnings.

Recommended Citation

What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2021, November). *Year Up*. <https://whatworks.ed.gov>.