What Works Clearinghouse

Dropout Prevention

November 2009

YouthBuild

Effectiveness

No studies of YouthBuild that fall within the scope of the Dropout Prevention review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of YouthBuild.

Program Description

YouthBuild offers low-income youth both education and job training services. YouthBuild's education component emphasizes attaining a GED or high school diploma, typically in alternative schools with small class sizes and an emphasis on individualized instruction. In YouthBuild's job-training program, participants work in construction jobs building affordable housing for low-income and homeless people in their communities. YouthBuild is targeted to youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who are from low-income families and who have demonstrated educational need, typically by being high school dropouts. Participants spend six months to two years in the program. During this time, they alternate weeks between being full-time students and working full-time in the job-training program. Throughout the program, youth participate in counseling, peer support groups, and life-planning exercises that are intended to encourage them to overcome negative habits and pursue life goals. YouthBuild programs are typically sponsored by community- or faith-based organizations. These programs are linked by a centralized national office that provides implementation support to local YouthBuild sites, such as staff training and information on best practices and program innovations.

The WWC identified 32 studies of YouthBuild that were published or released between 1996 and 2009.

Three studies are within the scope of the review protocol but do not meet WWC evidence standards because they use a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent. Twenty-five studies are out of the scope of the review protocol because they have an ineligible study design; these studies did not use a comparison group. Four studies are out of the scope of the review, as defined by the Dropout Prevention protocol, for reasons other than study design. Of these, three studies do not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol, and one study does not present primary research.

1. The studies in this report were reviewed using WWC Evidence Standards, Version 2.0 (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Chapter III).
2. The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly available source: the program's website (http://www.youthbuild.org, downloaded July 2009). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.
References

Studies that fall outside the Dropout Prevention review protocol or do not meet WWC evidence standards


Autrey, J. H. (1999). Effects of direct instruction and precision teaching on achievement and persistence of adult learners (Doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, 1999). Dissertation Abstracts International, 60(06), 1863A. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.


Cohen, M. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2008). Costs and benefits of a targeted intervention program for youthful offenders: The YouthBuild USA offender project. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it uses a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.


Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education. (2007). Charter annual report: Crispus Attucks Youthbuild CS. Harrisburg, PA: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Cohen, M. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2008). Costs and benefits of a targeted intervention program for youthful offenders: The YouthBuild USA offender project. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it uses a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.


Illinois Department of Human Services. (2007). YouthBuild 2007 annual report. Chicago, IL: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.


Leslie, A. (2007). YouthBuild USA youthful offender project: Year 1. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

References (continued)

Coalition. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Workforce Services Branch, Office of Youth Development. (2002). 2001 YouthBuild program overview. St. Paul, MN: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.


Whitten, K. S. (2007). Social capital networks of institutional agents and the empowerment of low-status youth in a federally funded intervention program (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 2007). Dissertation Abstracts International, 69, 117A. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.


YouthBuild USA. (2005). YouthBuild USA annual report 2004: Rebuilding communities, transforming lives. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

YouthBuild USA. (2006). YouthBuild USA 2005 annual report: Rebuilding our communities and our lives. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

YouthBuild USA. (2007). YouthBuild USA 2006 annual report: YouthBuild rebuilds what Katrina tore down. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.