

Program: YOUTH CORPS

Population Served:

Size: 1997 — 120 corps programs nationwide, enrolling 26,000 participants. Programs range in size from 20 to several hundred corps members.

Age: 18 to 25 years old (75 percent), 17 or less (23 percent), 36 or older (2 percent)

Other Characteristics: Educationally or economically disadvantaged, mostly minorities (slightly more than a quarter are white)

Studies: 1 experimental

Program Components:

Programs are initiated within local communities and address specific needs within the communities, so program components vary. Those summarized below are broad components.

<u>Component</u>	<u>Provided by</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Description</u>
Community service	Participants	6-12 months; 80 percent of participants' time	Participants work in groups of 8 to 15 on service projects within their community
Stipend	Program funding	Throughout enrollment	Generally equivalent to minimum wage or less
Educational stipends or small cash awards	Program funding	Not automatic; only offered sometimes, at completion of program	
Education and developmental activities	Program	6-12 months; 20 percent of participants' time	Strategies combined contextually based hands-on experience and traditional classroom education
Case management	Program	Throughout enrollment on an as-needed basis	If services are required from external providers, the services are coordinated by program personnel and incorporated into the Youth Corps experience

Program Objectives/Goals:

To address the specific needs of local communities through human services, educational, or environmental projects and to improve educational and employment prospects of participants and enhance their personal development. Specifically, programs were required to "make academic study available to participants to enable such participants to upgrade literacy skills, to obtain high school diplomas, or the equivalent of such diplomas, to obtain college degrees, or to enhance employable skills." (p.15)

Costs:

Program costs average \$9,540 per participant

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Study:

Jastrzab, J., Masker, J., Blomquist, J., & Orr, L. (1996) *Evaluation of national and community service programs. Impacts of service: Final report on the evaluation of American Conservation and Youth Service Corps*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates, Inc.

Study Objectives and Measurements:

Objective:

To assess the effectiveness of Youth Corps programs in nine outcome categories:

1. Civic, social, and personal development
2. Current and planned community service
3. Current or planned involvement in other social service
4. Voting behavior
5. Education and training achievements and plans
6. Employment and earnings
7. Involvement with risk behavior
8. Educational aspirations and expectations
9. Work performance

Measurement instrument:

Baseline interviews and follow-up telephone interviews approximately 15 months after random assignment; 41 outcome measures in nine broad categories.

Evaluation:

Type: Experimental. Random assignment to treatment and control groups.

Statistical techniques: Regression with demographic and background covariates; Chi-square, two-tailed t-test

Significance level: $p \leq .10$

Population evaluated: 626 youths (383 in treatment group and 243 in the control group). Four of the 100 year-round programs in 1993-1994 were studied experimentally: California Conservation Corps, Santa Clara District; Greater Miami Service Corps; City Volunteer Corps in New York City; and Washington State Service Corps.

Key Findings:

Findings summarized here are from the Participant Impacts portion of the study, which was experimental. A cost-benefit analysis and an analysis of community impacts were also reported, but they were not experimental. Refer to the complete report for those findings.

Overall:

During the follow-up period, participants, compared to persons in the control group:

- Were significantly more likely to have worked for pay (89 percent vs. 73 percent)
- Worked significantly more hours [568 more hours (or 40 percent), on average]
- Were significantly less likely to be arrested (12 percent vs. 17 percent)
- Were significantly less likely to earn a technical certificate or diploma (8 percent vs. 13 percent)

Most other measures showed positive, but not statistically significant, effects.

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Subgroups:

- No significant impacts associated with age of participants, whether they had completed high school, or their length of stay in the program.

Compared to their counterparts in the control group, **African American male participants experienced the following positive impacts:**

- Scored significantly higher on measures of personal and social responsibility. Participants scored 8 percent above control group members on the community involvement subscale (16.97 vs. 15.75 on a scale of 2 to 25) and 6 percent above control group members on the overall Personal and Social Responsibility scale (50.33 vs. 47.39 on a scale of 15 to 75).
- Were significantly more likely to have voted in the last election (22 percent vs. 4 percent)
- Had significantly higher employment rates (91 percent vs. 62 percent), had significantly higher earnings, and had significantly higher total hours worked (average monthly earnings and total hours worked were 1.5 times as large as those of the control group). Note that this includes work done while serving the Youth Corps program.
- Were significantly more likely to have an associate degree (4 percent vs. 0 percent)
- Were significantly more likely to have changed their educational aspirations (two-thirds of participants vs. less than 40 percent of the control group indicated they would like to graduate from college)
- Were significantly less likely to report having a good relationship with the people at work, besides their supervisor (80 percent of participants vs. 95 percent of control group members indicated they had a very good or pretty good relationship with co-workers)

Compared to their counterparts in the control group, **Hispanic male participants experienced the following positive impacts:**

- Worked significantly more hours since enrollment in the program (2,320 mean hours worked vs. 1,456)
- Received significantly more promotions at their current jobs (over one-third vs. 19 percent of).

Compared to their counterparts in the control group, **white male participants experienced the following negative impacts:**

- Were significantly less likely to be employed at follow-up (59 percent vs. 88 percent). This disparity is not explained by higher rates of school enrollment among participants.
- Had significantly lower monthly earnings (average earnings of \$875 per month vs. \$1,238 per month)
- Scored 8 percent lower on the measure of perceived control of work outcomes (mean score of 3.25 vs. 3.54 on a scale of 1 to 4)

Compared to their counterparts in the control group, **African American female participants experienced the following positive impacts:**

- Were more likely to have worked for pay during the follow-up period (86 percent vs. 62 percent)
- Were more likely to have received an award at their current job (35 percent vs. 9 percent, calculated for those currently working only)
- Were less likely to be unmarried and pregnant at follow-up (6 percent vs. 21 percent)

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Compared to their counterparts in the control group, **Hispanic female participants experienced the following generally positive impacts:**

- Were significantly more likely to have worked for pay since enrollment in the program (91 percent vs. 53 percent)
- Were more likely to have high educational aspirations (nearly two-thirds of participants, compared to 61 percent of their counterparts in the control group, indicated that they would like to graduate from a 4-year college or attend graduate school)
- Were less likely to receive a raise in their current job (0 percent vs. 40 percent). It is not likely that participants were at their post-Corps job long enough time to be eligible for a raise.

Compared to their counterparts in the control group, **white female participants experienced the following positive impacts:**

- Were more likely to have earned an associate's degree (over 25 percent vs. 0 percent)
- Were more likely to expect to graduate from a 4-year college or attend graduate school (89 percent vs. 57 percent)
- Were much less likely to have consumed five or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting during the previous month (3 percent vs. 32 percent)

Other Information:

These programs are funded under Subtitle C of the National and Community Service Act of 1990.

Youth Corps is the precursor to AmeriCorps. The programs share general characteristics, but traditionally Youth Corps serves a more disadvantaged population and places more emphasis on participant development.

Sites selected for analysis had to meet the following requirements:

- 70 or more participants
 - absence of recruiting problems
 - in operation at least 1 year
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