

Youth Employment in California

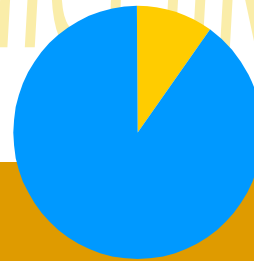
Youth employment is an essential violence prevention strategy. Job training helps youth learn skills and build self-esteem and jobs help many young people transition to the workplace. Programs that offer career mentoring, workforce readiness, on-the-job training, case management and follow-up services support youth in making positive contributions to their communities. Unfortunately, while the benefits of job-training programs are well-documented, job training and job opportunities for young people have declined.

Are young people working?

- Over the past three summer youth unemployment in California has risen from 15 percent to close to 20 percent of 16 to 19 year olds unemployed in summer of 2003¹
- Only 15 percent of California's three million young people ages of 14-18 had jobs in 2001.²
- Nationwide, more than a million jobs for youth have been lost since 2000.³
- Since 2000, the number of youth who are both unemployed and not in school has gone up by 12 percent nationwide, totaling an approximate 600,000 increase in out-of-school, unemployed youth.⁴
- Youth have been disproportionately impacted by the downturn in the national economy. In the last year and a half, young adults (ages 16-24) represented 53% of the total job losses among all U.S. adults despite the fact that they represent only 15% of the working population.⁵

"Nothing stops a bullet like a job."

Father Gregory J. Boyle of Jobs For A Future/Homeboy Industries



■ 90% of California voters think that job- and vocational-training programs are effective in preventing crime and ensuring safety⁶

KEY ISSUES

What is the future of vocational education? President Bush wants to redirect \$1 billion in annual funding from the Carl Perkins Vocational and Educational Training Act into a new Secondary and Technical Education program and requires that schools participating in the program offer 4 years of English, 3 years of math and science and 3 years of social studies as part of their vocational education curriculum. His plan would also reduce total funding by \$300 million. In addition, the money would not be earmarked specifically for vocational education programs and could threaten these programs' existence in California schools.⁷

Should legislators pursue funding to support vocational training programs? If so, at what level? (The end of the Perkins Act would eliminate \$47 million for vocational programs in schools as of June 2005.)

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What is the public investment in youth job training and jobs in California?

Federal

In 2000, the landscape of youth jobs and job training shifted to a long-term comprehensive approach workforce model guided by the **Workforce Investment Act** (WIA) of 1998 which funds both youth and adult employment programs in all 50 states. There are 50 local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) throughout California, planning and funding allocation bodies, each of which includes a Youth Council, as well as 400 One-Stop career centers, and most of which have youth services components. WIA programs statewide served 44,000 youth ages 14-21 in 2002-03.

Youth Opportunity Grants (YOG's), also federally-funded, are regional projects for youth, ages 14-21, who live in impoverished urban and rural areas designed to prepare and place youth in long-term private sector jobs and to increase college enrollment. Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and previously Oakland, all were YOG sites, but the funding has already ended for Oakland and for the others the program will end next year.

The **Youth Challenge Grant** program will replace the YOG and award grants through a combination of competitive and discretionary grants. The funding (\$43.6 million) for the Youth Challenge Grant will come out of the WIA allocation, which will mean a 25 percent reduction in funding for WIA youth programs statewide starting 2004-05.

Sixty-eight **Youth Employment Opportunity Programs** operates out of local Employment Development Departments in 66 cities across the state. These programs provide educational and vocational services to youth, ages 15 to 21. Eligibility is based on attendance at school. If a youth is thinking of dropping out of school (high school, continuation school, college, university, vocational training), or has already dropped out, they are eligible to enroll.

Another federal funding stream is the **Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act** of 1998, which provided more than \$47 million to California high schools in 2003-04 for vocational education opportunities such as Agriculture, business and marketing occupation, industrial and tech education, home economics, and health. The Act has been extended through June 30, 2005 yet funding beyond that date is dependent on reauthorization.

State

In California, the career-focused **School-to-Career** (STC) program, is no longer funded. The final \$1.7 million was distributed this year to 19 partnerships, with the funding are scheduled to end September 30, 2004.

The **Regional Occupational Centers Programs** (ROCPs), initiated in the 1970s to extend the vocational education opportunities provided by the high schools, now provide capstone courses for most of the state's secondary school vocational and technical education programs. Worksite learning is integral to a high percent of the ROCP courses. These centers and programs are supported by the state at an annual cost that exceeds \$360 million. The ROCPs served over 210,000 of the approximately 1.25 million students enrolled in secondary vocational and technical education programs in 2002-2003.

The **California Department of Education** funds a handful of employment-related services through several small grants such as \$400,000 available for Youth Council support, \$3.75 million for One-Stop Career Center youth services, and \$1.4 million of tech-prep industry sector development.

Local

On a local level initiatives have not changed much in the past 10 years, except that many employment programs which partnered with the private sector suffered severe cutbacks when the economy changed in the late 1990's, resulting in far fewer employment opportunities for youth in the private sector. Still, many communities - local government agencies, nonprofits and private businesses - provide additional opportunities for youth through summer and year-round jobs' programs funded with local public and private monies.

There are "very few" California school Districts that offer high school options for vocational and business accreditation or certification programs for students. Enrollment in vocational education programs in California high schools has dropped 26% since 1987-88⁸

¹U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

²U.S. Census

³Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, *Left Behind in the Labor Market 2003*

⁴U.S. Census

⁵Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, *Left Behind in the Labor Market 2003*

⁶2004 Voter Survey funded by The California Wellness Foundation

^{7,8}California Department of Education