

# BRIEFLY...

Highlights of Report Number: 06-03-001-03-390, a report to the Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration. March 31, 2003.

## WHY READ THE REPORT

Between March 2000 and June 2002, 36 high poverty communities received \$465 million in Youth Opportunity (YO) grants under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The YO program supports comprehensive education, training, and employment services to youth, ages 14-21. Communities receive funding for 5 years. Key outcomes include increasing the employment, high school graduation, and college enrollment rates in the communities. Approximately 66,000 youth were enrolled in YO as of March 2003.

WIA reauthorization is considering new approaches to serving out-of-school youth more effectively. "Lessons learned" from the YO program can help local communities design and implement programs to help more young people successfully pursue postsecondary education and training and employment.

## WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE AUDIT

A prior OIG audit of youth programs funded under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) found that vocational skills training helped youth in achieving their employment and earning goals. We audited 12 YO grantees to assess educational services and vocational skills training provided to out-of-school youth (OSY). Our audit covered OSY enrolled in the YO program as of September 30, 2001, who had received some service as of December 31, 2001.

## READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full agency response, go to:

<http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2003/06-03-001-03-390.pdf>.

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# MORE EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES WOULD STRENGTHEN WIA'S YOUTH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

## WHAT OIG FOUND

We sampled 240 individuals whom grantees reported as OSY. Only 176 youth actually received services. We found:

- The majority of youth (68 percent) received work readiness or work-related services rather than educational and vocational skills training (45 percent).
- Fewer than a third (26 percent) of youth 17 and older, who entered the program with a high school diploma, equivalent, or some college, received vocational training or educational assistance.
- Grantees' records did not accurately report the number of OSY enrolled in the YO program.

## WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

We recommended that ETA strengthen educational and vocational training activities for out-of-school high school graduates. We also recommended developing procedures to reduce inaccurate reporting.

ETA has taken steps to strengthen the educational and training component in the YO program and improve reporting. Technical assistance to YO grantees has included workshops on how to collaborate with community colleges for skills training, how to conduct college-bound programs, and how to ensure accurate data collection and reporting.