

The Employment Training Center (ETC) program of training and guidance for youth was found to be highly effective at engaging youth in training activities and increasing employment and earnings. As a result, the Department of Labor chose to fund replication of the model at 12 other sites in the US. This report details the evaluation results from a random assignment study assessing the training and outcomes for youth at these replication sites in order to inform the DOL decisions on further funding of the ETC model.

In short, the evaluation of the ETC replication sites suggests that the programs did not increase training over levels for the control groups and did not increase employment or earnings. At very least, further study is warranted prior to increasing the number or size of ETC programs.

Study Design: Over 1300 Youth at 12 replication sites were randomly assigned to a program group receiving the full ETC program services and a control group which received more limited services. The youth were followed over a 30 month period to assess training and education levels and employment outcomes.

The program participants received limited training. Only between 28 and 34 percent of program participants received training activities¹, though the level was significantly higher than training levels for the control group.² Overall, only about half of program participants participated in any activities (54 percent), and slightly fewer participated in education activities than did control group members (35 percent vs. 37 percent).

Employment levels were not higher for program participants. Overall, employment rates over the 30 month follow-up period were high but statistically indistinguishable for program and control groups (87 and 90 percent for program and control groups, respectively). However, among both men and women the rates of employment were slightly lower for program participants than for the control group. It is possible that more intensive training might have delayed employment for some in the program group, but a 30 month follow-up is likely to catch most immediate employment.

Earnings were not higher for program participants. Among women, average earnings over the 30 month follow-up were similar for the program and control groups (\$11,998 and \$11,886).³ Among men, earnings were actually somewhat higher for the control group at \$17,302, compared to \$15,981 for the program group.⁴ Wages for those who were employed were slightly higher for the program group overall (\$7.54 vs. \$7.44), so the earnings differences may be driven by the lower levels of employment for the program group.

Summary: The study was well-structured with large randomly-assigned program and control groups monitored over a 30 month period. However, outcomes for the program group may have improved over a longer period (if the program delayed employment). Also, the evaluation would benefit from further investigation of the level of training provided to the control group. If this is typical for youth, then it will serve as a good baseline comparison. However, the relatively high training for the control group might indicate spill-over of services that decreases the assessment of the program effects. Finally, it's unclear if the program is being adequately implemented at the replication sites. Further investigation of the program implementation across the sites and its impact on outcome measures could inform decisions about the value and resource demands of replication.

¹ 90 percent confidence level.

² 31 percent and 22 percent for program and control groups respectively. Statistically significant (p=.00013)

³ Not statistically significant at 10 percent. (p=.83)

⁴ Difference statistically significant at 10% (p=.08)

