

PROCESS/IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION OF THE YOUNG PARENTS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

September 2008 – September 2011

Project Summary: The Young Parents Demonstration (YPD) Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) to test innovative strategies that can improve the skills and education of young parents and, ultimately their employment and earnings. Thirteen grants were awarded in 2009. Grant recipients include seven Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) or One-Stop Career Centers and six community-based nonprofit service provider organizations. The YPD initiative is designed to provide educational and occupational skills training that fosters family economic self-sufficiency to young parents (both mothers and fathers) and expectant parents 16 to 24 years of age. The YPD projects serve young parents including, as applicable, those in high-risk categories such as victims of child abuse, children of incarcerated parents, court-involved youth, youth at risk of court involvement, homeless and runaway youth, Native American youth, migrant youth, youth in or aging out of foster care, and youth with disabilities. The YPD grantees are required to develop a "bump-up" intervention that provides an additional level above and beyond the existing level of services specifically intended to increase an individual's education, job training and employment. With a 50/50 chance of being in either group, individuals enrolling in the program are randomly assigned to treatment (bump-up) and control groups. Those individuals assigned to the treatment, or "bump-up," group receive the additional services, while individuals assigned to the control group receive the existing services offered by the grantee. A key factor in the bump-up design is having a single, persistent intervention for the treatment group that is substantially different from what the control group receives. Each of the grantees is implementing one of the following bump-up interventions: (1) professional staff mentoring/navigation or (2) occupation-specific training.

The Urban Institute, with subcontractors Capital Research Corporation and Abt Associates, Inc. are conducting a process/implementation study of this initiative. This same team of researchers (under a contract with Capital Research Corporation) is also conducting a net impact and cost-effectiveness study of YPD. Under the process study, the research team has focused on both getting the sites up and running and laying the groundwork for data collection to ultimately support the process/implementation, net impact, and cost-effectiveness analyses that are planned under the overall YPD evaluation. In addition to making certain that each of the sites has implemented their initiatives and randomization with integrity, the research team has been involved in several critical activities that have been aimed at laying the groundwork for collection of high quality data to support the impact study and other evaluation activities to be funded under this BPA:

- Participant Tracking System. To support the evaluation effort and random assignment, the Urban Institute team collaborated with, and coordinated the work of, the technical assistance contractors (Lewin/Avar) on the design and implementation of what is referred to as the Participant Tracking System (PTS), which provides a standardized format of participant data across the sites to establish an efficient and effective random assignment procedure. In addition to enabling sites to randomize YPD participants into bump-up or control groups, the web-based PTS was developed to compile administrative data in a systematic format on participants and the services they receive over time.
- Field-based Implementation Site Visits. Another important research activity being conducted during the first phase of the Urban Institute's YPD study is a round of implementation analysis site visits. Researchers conducted an initial round of visits to each of the 13 YPD sites to plan and initiate random assignment. During 2011, this same team will be conducting an initial round of process study site visits to the Round I and II sites during the Summer/Fall 2010. It is anticipated that a one- or two-person team will spend an average of two days on site at each grantee program, during which key administrators and staff at each grantee site will be interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide.
- Ongoing Monitoring of Site Operations. The CRC and Urban Institute team has been coordinating YPD site monitoring activities. This includes monitoring the enrollment of youth into the YPD research sample (e.g., monitoring the integrity of the random assignment process), the completeness of data entered into the PTS, and answering data and program design inquiries from the grantees.

2008-03 [12/2010]