

# **The Reconnecting Youth Campaign, Year One: \$195 Million More for Opportunity Youth**



THE  
**RECONNECTING  
YOUTH CAMPAIGN**  
UNLEASHING LIMITLESS POTENTIAL





## Acknowledgements

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## Publisher

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The Forum for Youth Investment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank” dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21<sup>®</sup>—ready for college, work, and life. Informed by rigorous research and practical experience, the forum forges innovative ideas, strategies, and partnerships to strengthen solutions for young people and those who care about them. For more information, please visit <http://www.forumfyi.org>.

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## The Reconnecting Youth Campaign

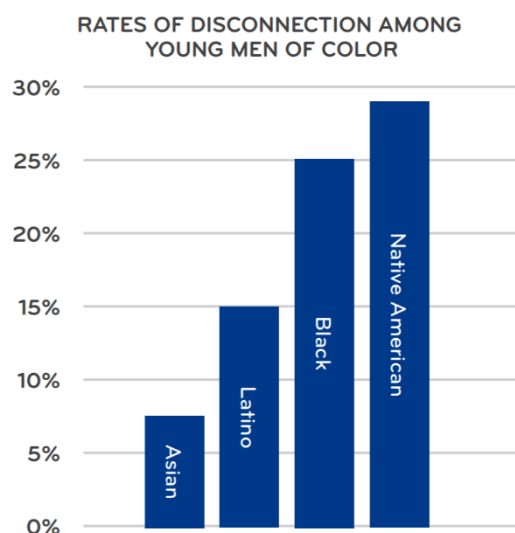
In January 2017, the Reconnecting Youth Campaign launched, calling on Congress to invest in America's future by funding education, employment, training and national service opportunities for one million Opportunity Youth: young people ages 16- to 24 who are not in school and not working. We launched this campaign during a difficult time in which the president's budget request to Congress proposed cutting billions of dollars from federal programs serving Opportunity Youth. In less than one year, the Reconnecting Youth Campaign not only helped prevent the proposed cuts, but also helped secure historic increases. When the Reconnecting Youth Campaign started in FY17, the federal government invested \$3.216B on Opportunity Youth programs. In FY18 they invested \$3.290B (\$73M more than FY17 levels). In FY19 they invested \$3.338B (\$122M more than FY17 levels). Total investments across the two years add up to \$195M more funding than if investments stayed at the FY17 levels.

This brief lays out the keys to our legislative success and offers an analysis of which programs received the funding increases, as well as information on who can receive these funds and how to apply for them.

This brief was commissioned by the Opportunity Youth/Boys and Men of Color Alignment Strategy Group, since boys and men of color are significantly more likely to be disconnected than are other populations.

Our journey began with a 2012 paper, *A Bridge to Reconnection*, written by John Bridgeland, CEO of Civic Enterprises and former Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council under President George W. Bush. The paper identified the federal programs currently reconnecting Opportunity Youth to education, training,

employment and national service, and estimated the federal investment required to expand these programs to serve one million Opportunity



Data Source: Lewis, K., and Burd-Sharps, S. (2015). *Zeroing in on Place and Race: Youth Disconnection in America's Cities*. New York City: Measure of America.

Youth each year, and the cost savings that would result by doing so.<sup>1</sup> In 2016, Bridgeland updated his analysis and found that “the federal government could reach more than one million Opportunity Youth each year at an average annual cost of \$6.5 billion by the fifth year, a net increase in funding of \$4 billion over the current level. This is over 660,000 more Opportunity Youth than the number estimated to be currently served.” Unfortunately, he also found that, “the number of Opportunity Youth served by federal programs has actually decreased since 2012, falling from 440,000 to about 340,000 federally funded annual opportunities to access education, employment, or community service.”<sup>2</sup>

This decrease in Federal funding served as a clarion call to the field. It was especially surprising since the decrease occurred during a period in which Opportunity Youth were benefiting from unprecedented attention and

<sup>1</sup> Belfield, C; Levin, H; and Rosen, R. (2012). *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.

<sup>2</sup> Bridgeland, J.; Ingram, E.; and Atwell, M. (2016). *A Bridge to Connection: A Plan for Reconnecting One*

*Million Opportunity Youth Each Year Through Federal Funding Streams*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.

action by corporations, foundations, nonprofits and the Obama administration.

In response, a coalition of organizations came together in 2017 to launch the Reconnecting Youth Campaign. Our shared goal is an increase in federal appropriations to enable the education, training, national service and employment opportunity programs to move from serving 340,000 to one million Opportunity Youth each year.

## Keys to Success

The Congressional Management Foundation has found that the most successful advocacy campaigns focus on Members of Congress' *heads* (funding is a smart investment for my district/state), *hearts* (I am moved to invest in this population) and *political health* (this will help me get reelected). The Reconnecting Youth Campaign built a coalition that advanced our shared agenda in all three ways: providing district-level Return on Investment data (*heads*), creating direct interactions with Opportunity Youth (*hearts*), launching an Advocacy Academy for organizations in key congressional districts (*political health*) and conducting online communications and advocacy (*political health*). All of our work centered around deepening relationships among youth, advocates and congressional offices. We brought all three approaches together as part of a sophisticated government relations strategy.

### **BUILDING A COALITION AND SHARED POLICY AGENDA**

Advancing a shared policy agenda focused on increasing federal appropriations for Opportunity Youth requires a combination of collaboration, communication and joint action. Fortunately, there were already strong relationships across the Opportunity Youth and allied fields through the Opportunity Youth Network and other organizations and networks. Five organizations stepped up to dedicate significant time to co-facilitating the campaign: the Forum for Youth Investment/Opportunity Youth Network, YouthBuild USA, the Center for Law and Social Policy, the National Youth Employment Coalition and Opportunity Youth United. More than 50 national organizations have participated in the Campaign's quarterly convenings and activities.

We had a strong starting point for our federal appropriations agenda from the *Bridge to Reconnection* paper's list of Federal funding streams for Opportunity Youth. We made the following key decisions:

- We will align with and support key advocacy campaigns focused on child

welfare, youth experiencing homelessness, juvenile justice and immigration—including time devoted to understanding the policy priorities and strategic messaging for each issue area during our quarterly convenings.

- While our agenda cuts across multiple appropriations subcommittees, we will focus our staff time in the first year on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee, as that covers most of the funding streams in our agenda.
- As part of our overall goal of increasing investments by \$4 billion, we will call for funding for each program to be increased each year, but we would not cite specific amounts for each program. We made this decision because we could not come up with consistent criteria to use: some of the federal programs have authorized funding levels and/or organizations advocating for specific funding levels, others do not.

## **PROVIDING RECONNECTION DIVIDEND DATA FOR EACH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

According to the Congressional Management Foundation, 91 percent of congressional staff say it is helpful for advocacy organizations to give Members of Congress information about the impact that a bill would have on their district and state, yet only 9 percent say they frequently receive such information.

We understood that asking Congress to increase Federal funding for Opportunity Youth by \$4 billion a year would get pushback from fiscal hawks on both sides of the aisle.

In response, we used data from Measure of America on the number of Opportunity Youth in each congressional district,<sup>3</sup> and an analysis by economist Clive Belfield of the economic return on investment to taxpayers and society of reconnecting Opportunity Youth,<sup>4</sup> and created one-pagers that we brought to every

congressional meeting. These one-pagers included the number of Opportunity Youth in the policymaker’s district and state, an estimation of the number who would be reconnected if federal funding were increased, and the resulting economic benefits to their district and state, which we framed as a “Reconnection Dividend.”

This information proved pivotal in our conversation with congressional offices, allowing us to discuss the impact and value of reconnecting Opportunity Youth. Many congressional staffers noted how helpful this information was, saying for example “This is what my boss always asks me for!”

## **CREATING DIRECT INTERACTIONS BETWEEN OPPORTUNITY YOUTH AND POLICYMAKERS**

Opportunity Youth United, a national movement of young leaders who have joined forces to increase opportunity and decrease poverty in America, arranged for young alumni of federally-funded Opportunity Youth programs to join every congressional meeting we held. These courageous young leaders shared stories about how their lives were forever changed by a federally funded program.

Each young person’s story represented the power that one or multiple programs can make

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*We believe that connecting young people to Members of Congress has been the biggest factor in our success.*

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in a young person’s life and as a catalyst for change in the community. Opportunity Youth inspire others with their stories of hope, resilience and perseverance.

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<sup>3</sup> Burd-Sharps, S.; and Lewis, K. (2018). *More than a Million Reasons for Hope: Youth Disconnection in Congressional Districts*. Brooklyn, NY: Measure of America.

<sup>4</sup> Belfield, C; Levin, H; and Rosen, R. (2012). *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.

We believe that connecting young people to Members of Congress has been the biggest factor in our success.

To further advance and inform our campaign's advocacy activities, we also welcomed a former Opportunity Youth onto our team as a government relations consultant.

Young people are the experts on their own lives and so we must continue to ensure that their voices are heard by elected leaders who shape the policies that impact Opportunity Youth in communities across the country.

### **LAUNCHING AN ADVOCACY ACADEMY IN KEY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS**

As we were leaving one Senator's office, we overheard a senior staffer asking the scheduler if she could leave for the day. The scheduler responded, "Yes, the only meetings left are out of state"—meaning that meetings with national advocates did not require as much attention as meetings with citizens of the state the Senator was elected to represent.

In recognition of the importance of mobilizing local stakeholders to directly engage with their Members of Congress, we launched the first-ever Advocacy Academy for Opportunity Youth organizations. The Advocacy Academy consists of state and local organizations around the country working to ensure that Opportunity Youth are at the forefront of the minds of policymakers and leaders. Academy members receive online advocacy tools and engage in virtual convenings and trainings that demystify advocacy, spotlight best practices and build skills through interactive exercises and coaching.

As a member of Opportunity Youth United and the Advocacy Academy said, "I still can't believe I had the chance to start a relationship with both congressional district offices. I was nervous at each meeting, but I felt a responsibility to let them know that this situation is affecting our community. I have been learning and growing with these Advocacy Academy workshops. I cannot wait to see more young leaders thrive in the community because of others voice of action."

### **CONDUCTING ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY**

Our campaign conducted broad online communications and advocacy activities. We created a website landing page, developed a logo and brand identity kit, produced videos, and created a social media and messaging toolkit and activation grid. We launched a national #MyOpportunity grassroots story campaign that uses social media to collect video and written stories from program alumni. We also compiled stories and testimonials from campaign member organizations in order to create a shared storybank, cross-tabbed by program, state and congressional district. To build our collective ability to advocate across issues, we developed quarterly "messaging fairs," round-robin small group discussions that let members delve into policy developments and messaging dos and don'ts on issues such as child welfare, safety net programs, immigration, homelessness, apprenticeships and juvenile justice.

To encourage organizations to show their support for the campaign, we circulate a letter to the Appropriations Committee, signed by 50 organizations. To encourage individuals to show their support, we created an online action alert to make it easy to send tailored messages to elected officials.

We crafted a social media toolkit to increase the visibility of our campaign's advocacy activities on Capitol Hill, a tactic that proved effective. Groups took photos outside of each congressional office we met with and Tweeted the picture, tagging the Senator or Representative and thanking them. Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle retweeted these posts and thanked us in their eNewsletters.



## EXECUTING A SOPHISTICATED GOVERNMENT RELATIONS STRATEGY

All of our campaign activities are designed to support our goal: influencing the Appropriations Committee to increase funding for Opportunity Youth programs. Our government relations strategy focused on building a bipartisan set of congressional champions to sign “Dear Colleague” letters.

Every year, all Members of Congress who are not on the Appropriations Committee write

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*Securing the first-ever bipartisan Dear Colleague letter calling for funding increases for Opportunity Youth.*

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letters to their colleagues on the committee indicating their requested level of funding for specific programs. We decided to focus our advocacy activities on getting, for the first time in history, a bipartisan Dear Colleague letter calling for funding increases for a comprehensive slate of Federal Opportunity Youth programs. Our tactics included meeting with dozens of congressional offices to secure a democrat (Representative Jimmy Gomez, D-CA-34) and a republican (Representative Steve Knight, R-CA-25) to lead the Dear Colleague letter. During the key weeklong period when Members of Congress decide which “Dear Colleague” letters they will sign, we reached out to every office we had met with and used our Quorum public affairs software to send individualized emails to hundreds of legislative directors and associates. And we assigned three staff to spend a full day calling as many congressional offices as possible.

The result was impressive. All told a bipartisan set of 24 congressmen and congresswomen and 12 Senators signed on to our Dear Colleague letter, a very impressive feat during a period in which few Republicans were signing onto any Dear Colleague letter that called for a funding increase.

## BEING READY WHEN A POLITICAL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY OPENS

Timing is everything, and you can’t always predict when a political window of opportunity will present itself. Financial advisors say that you should always remain in the stock market because you can’t predict when prices will soar. The same is true in politics. After the election, and when the president’s budget requested that Congress cut more than \$1 billion dollars from Opportunity Youth programs, many in the field suggested that we shift our advocacy to state and local government. We stayed committed to action at all three levels of government, agreeing as a campaign that this was the time to increase instead of decrease our federal advocacy. We were also told to focus just on playing defense and preventing the proposed cuts. While we did oppose budget cuts, we affirmed as a campaign that we would stay focused on our call for large-scale funding increases.

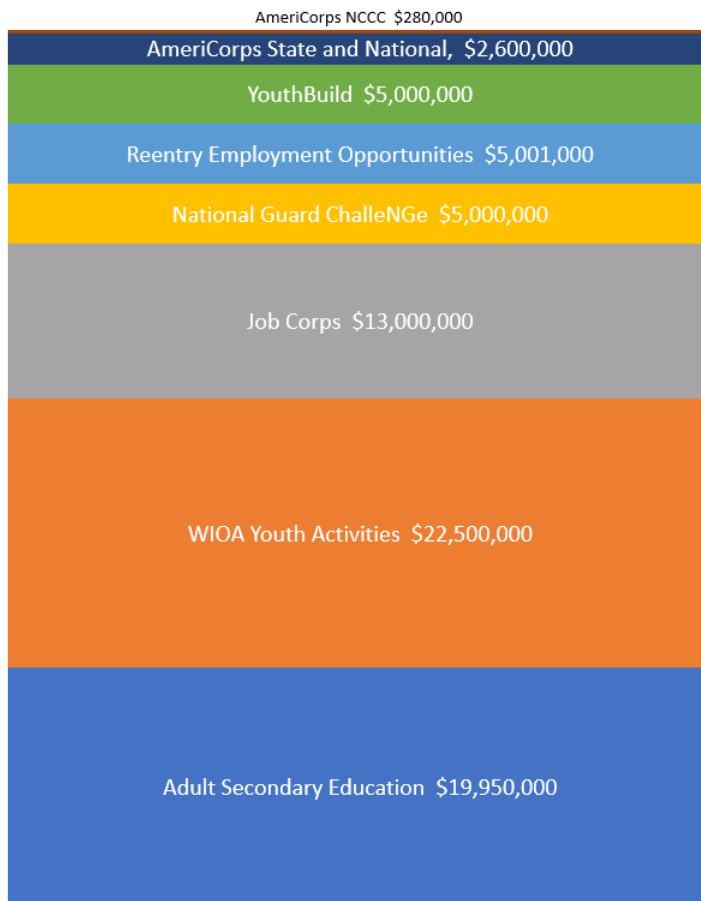
There was an unexpected moment of opportunity when Congress passed a budget deal that increased funding for both military and domestic programs at roughly equal levels. Fortunately, due to the activities above, we were at the right place at the right time to ensure that Opportunity Youth programs got at least their fair share of these increased resources. We continued our bipartisan advocacy, both in Washington and—through our Advocacy Academy and member organizations’ local networks—with state and district offices across the country. In FY18, federal appropriations for our programs were increased by \$73 million over FY17 levels, and in FY19 federal appropriations were increased even more to \$122 million over FY17 levels. Total investments across the two years adds up to \$195 million more dollars in funding than if appropriations had remained at FY17 levels.



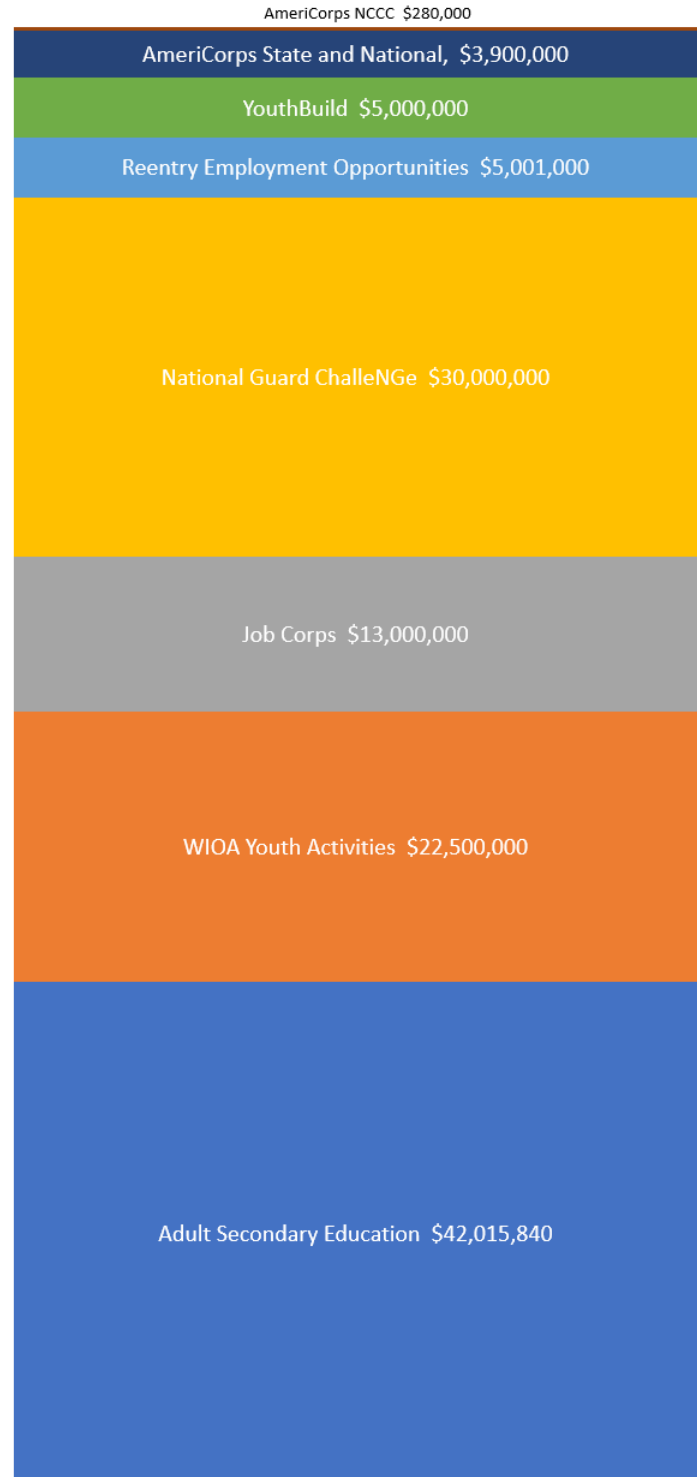
# Federal Funding Streams for Opportunity Youth that were Increased Over FY17 Levels

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\$130,000,000  
\$110,000,000  
\$90,000,000  
\$70,000,000  
\$50,000,000  
\$30,000,000  
\$10,000,000



FY18: Size of Increases to Opportunity Youth Programs Above FY17 Levels



FY19: Size of Increases to Opportunity Youth Programs Above FY17 Levels

<sup>5</sup> Based on calculations in *A Bridge to Reconnection: A Plan for Reconnecting One Million Opportunity Youth Each Year Through Federal Funding Streams*, we weight each funding stream by the estimated percentage of beneficiaries that are Opportunity Youth. Those in the chart above that are less than 100% for Opportunity Youth include: Adult Secondary Education (57%), WIOA Youth Activities (75%), AmeriCorps State and National (10%), and AmeriCorps NCCC (14%).



## Conclusion

While the Reconnecting Youth Campaign is off to a great start, we still have a long way to go. While the budget increases in FY18 and FY19 were significant wins, funding remains wholly insufficient. The FY18 and FY19 increases only provide approximately 7,000 additional Opportunity Youth per year new chances to reconnect. Even if Congress steps up fulfill our campaign's goal to invest in America's future by funding education, training, national service and employment opportunities for one million 16-to 24-year-olds who are not in school or work, that would still leave more than three million Opportunity Youth per year with too few places to turn for help.

And all signs suggest that the next couple of years are going to be tough ones for appropriations, as a divided Congress will have to once again negotiate overall spending levels and there will likely be proposals for sharp decreases in "non-defense discretionary programs" that support not only Opportunity Youth but vulnerable populations across the board.

We are on the right path to unleash the limitless potential trapped in young people who have too few opportunities to provide for themselves and their families, help transform their communities, and increase the financial and civic health of our nation. We will need everyone's help to protect and expand our hard-fought gains. We call on you to join us.





## **Appendix: Guide to Accessing Federal Funding Streams for Opportunity Youth**

For each federal funding stream, the following pages outline the services provided, youth eligibility criteria, how youth can access the services, what entities can receive the funding, and how to apply for the funds.

We include not only the funding streams that are the primary focus of our campaign, but also some additional ones that are also relevant to certain subpopulations of Opportunity Youth.

## National, Community and Military Service

Federal Funding Stream	Services Provided	Youth Eligibility
<b>AmeriCorps State/National</b> uses national service to address critical community needs. Organizations are awarded grants on an annual basis by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). CNCS provides funding to both state commissions and through national pass through funds to administer projects, recruit members, and perform service hours. AmeriCorps members engage in a range of service projects to address critical community needs such as disaster services, economic opportunity, education, healthy futures, environmental stewardship and veterans and military families. Members are catalysts for change, working to advance local solutions. Corps members can earn an education award equal to the maximum Pell amount (\$6,095) that can cover various post-secondary education costs.	AmeriCorps members can serve either a <u>full-time</u> term of service which requires 1,700 hours or a <u>part-time</u> term, which can range from 300 to 900 hours. During their time, members engage in service projects such as building affordable housing for low-income people, providing disaster recovery services, doing environmental clean-up work, and tutoring children, amongst other activities. Members learn valuable transferable skills. They are also allowed to participate in some limited education and training during their service.	To be eligible for AmeriCorps State and National, a participant must be at least 17 years of age or be an out-of-school youth 16 years of age at the commencement of service and has not left school to join AmeriCorps. Corps members must have received a high school diploma or its equivalent OR agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent (unless this requirement is waived based on an individual education assessment conducted by the program).
<b>AmeriCorps VISTA</b> members work in communities facing poverty, inequity, and unemployment. VISTA members serve in a professional setting building partnerships, writing grants, and organizing volunteers. VISTA members are catalysts for change, working to advance local solutions. VISTA Members can earn an education award equal to the maximum Pell amount (\$6,095) that can cover various post-secondary education costs OR an \$1,800 cash stipend. VISTAs are also eligible for a living allowance that ranges from approximately \$33-66 per day, depending on geographic location of the program, at the discretion of CNCS.	VISTA members serve <u>full-time</u> for one full year at a community organization such as a non-profit, college/university, local government office, etc. VISTA members develop skills in outreach, marketing campaigns, social media, creating program databases, writing grants, program management, volunteer recruitment, and other activities.	Applicants must be over 18 years old when they start their term (there is no upper limit to apply). They also must have one of the following citizenship statuses: U.S. Citizen, U.S. National, Lawful Permanent Resident Aliens, or persons legally residing in a state that have the following legal residency classifications: refugee, asylum or asylee, temporary protected status or DACA status. Applicants can apply year round for available positions, depending on position availability. Members must have completed their high school diploma or equivalent.
<b>AmeriCorps NCCC</b> members strengthen communities and develop leadership skills through direct, team-based service. Teams of young adults, age 18-24, travel across the country to complete projects that meet crucial community needs. FEMA Corps members complete projects specifically designed by FEMA to support disaster preparedness and response. Members can earn an education award equal to the maximum Pell amount (\$6,095) that can cover various post-secondary education expenses. They are also eligible for a living allowance that may vary by program, but is often around \$90/week.	NCCC members serve <u>full-time</u> . NCCC is focused on projects like disaster relief and rehabilitation. This is a residential program. Corps members learn valuable job skills in housing rehabilitation, construction, energy conservation, rural and urban development, mentoring, environmental cleanup, etc.	18-24 year-olds are eligible, no prior experience required. Members required to complete 1,700 hours of service, including 80 hours of independent service activities. Requirements: serve effectively with a team; be able to communicate, to some extent, in English; perform physical labor, sometimes in stressful environments or difficult weather conditions. Members also must be willing to serve long hours beyond an eight-hour workday. Members must be able to deploy to any location in the region served by their program. Youth are able to apply three times per year (winter, summer, fall).
<b>National Guard Youth Challenge Program</b> is administered by the National Guard Bureau. This program is designed to provide opportunities for young people who left school without earning their diploma. The first five months of the program are residential, followed by 12 months of follow-up services. There are currently 40 programs in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. This is a very structured program that uses the military model. The program also works with youth after graduation to help with college and vocational school enrollment, military enlistment, and other career activities. The program empowers participants to embrace responsibility, achievement, and positive behavior.	Daily academic classes focused on preparation for high school equivalency exams, credit recovery, or a high school diploma. Focus on education around substance abuse and other health related issues. Career exploration activities such as career assessment and interest inventories, job-specific skills orientation, resume and job interview preparation, and some training in local vocational centers. Participants also receive basic military training in rules, customs, courtesies, team building, leadership development, and financial literacy training. There is also a focus on community service and citizenship, with a required 40 hours minimum of community and/or conservation project activities. All students receive mentors. Room and board provided for the five-month residential portion.	To enroll, youth must be between the ages of 16-18 (they must not exceed 18 by the first day of courses), be unemployed/underemployed, and have left high school without a diploma (and has not yet earned an equivalent). Young people must also be current legal residents. Young people must not be on parole or probation (for anything other than juvenile status offenses), not awaiting sentencing, and not under indictment, charged, or convicted of a crime that is considered a felony when charged as an adult. Applicants cannot be court-ordered to attend the program. Participants will be drug screened and must be free from use of illegal drugs. Young people must be physically and mentally capable of participating in the program with reasonable accommodation for physical and other disabilities.



## National, Community and Military Service

How Youth Access Services	What Entities Can Receive the Funding?	How to Apply for Funds
There are two ways to search for AmeriCorps programs in your community. 1) Use this link to search AmeriCorps opportunities by state: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/v/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corps-network/find-program-ameri-corps-network/browse-state-commissions">https://www.nationalservice.gov/v/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corps-network/find-program-ameri-corps-network/browse-state-commissions</a> 2) Use this link to search AmeriCorps opportunities by interest area: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/v/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corps-network/find-program-ameri-corps-network">https://www.nationalservice.gov/v/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corps-network/find-program-ameri-corps-network</a>	There are two types of grants: National Direct Grants and State Service Commission Grants. To be eligible for the <u>National Direct Grants</u> applicants must be at least one of the following: a national non-profit that operates in two or more states; an Indian tribe, a consortia formed across two or more states consisting of institutes of higher education or other non-profits, including labor, faith-based, or other community based organizations; a state or territory without a State Service Commission; or a single-state applicant from South Dakota. Applicants for the <u>State Service Commission</u> funding are eligible if program activities take place in a single state and are one of the following: state or local non-profit organization; community and/or faith-based organization; state or local higher education institution, state or local government entity, U.S. territory.	For <u>National Direct Grants</u> , funding is based on availability of funds from Congress. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFA) often goes out in the fall or winter. Projects with the following focuses are prioritized: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, healthy futures, veterans and military families; Governor and Mayor initiatives, safe communities, evidence based intervention planning grants, and programs that engage Americans ages 55 and older. For <u>State Service Commission</u> funding, a notice of intent to apply is strongly encouraged before submitting an application. This process usually begins in the fall. It is strongly encouraged that you contact your State Service Commission before applying. That contact information can be found at: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions">https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions</a>
To search for VISTA positions, visit: <a href="https://my.americorps.gov/mp/isting/publicRequestSearch.do">https://my.americorps.gov/mp/isting/publicRequestSearch.do</a> To start your application, visit: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/v/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corpsvista/start-your-application">https://www.nationalservice.gov/v/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corpsvista/start-your-application</a>	Public, private, or faith-based non-profits, or local/state agencies can become an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsoring organization. Project sponsors must be able to direct the project, supervise the VISTA, and provide necessary administrative support to complete the project. One of the main requirements is that the VISTA member's project is sustainable after their term ends. There are two different cost-share scenarios. In the first, the sponsoring organization funds local operational and logistical costs such as a computer and office space, while CNCS offers a living allowance, the AmeriCorps Segal Education award, health coverage, and other benefits. The second scenario is the same except the sponsoring organization would cover part or all of the living allowance for the VISTA.	Applicants must apply to their state office, which can be found here: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/stateoffices">https://www.nationalservice.gov/stateoffices</a> Organizations can apply using this system: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/egrants">https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/egrants</a>
To apply for NCCC visit: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/NCCC_Application_Process_2016-07-25.pdf">https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/NCCC_Application_Process_2016-07-25.pdf</a>	Entities eligible to apply: local municipalities, state governments, federal government entities, National or state parks, Indian tribes, schools, or non-profit organizations (either secular or faith-based). There are 4 regional campuses: Denver, CO; Sacramento, CA; Vicksburg, MS; Vinton, IA.	A potential sponsoring organization can submit a project application to a regional campus that serves the local community. Potential applicants should complete a project concept form. Materials can be found at: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corps-nccc/sponsor-ameri-corps-nccc">https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/ameri-corps-nccc/sponsor-ameri-corps-nccc</a> There is a separate application for entities who would like to perform a project related to responding to a recent disaster or firefighting projects. Those materials can be found: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/640_NPS04A_NCCC_Traditional%20Disaster%20Response%20and%20Firefighting%20Application%20Instructions_06_05_2018_508.pdf">https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/640_NPS04A_NCCC_Traditional%20Disaster%20Response%20and%20Firefighting%20Application%20Instructions_06_05_2018_508.pdf</a>
For more information about whether there is a Challenge program in your state, and to learn about application processes, visit: <a href="http://www.ngyf.org/challenge-near-you/">http://www.ngyf.org/challenge-near-you/</a>	This program is run directly out of the National Guard. They do not sub-grant or contract out work to other entities.	For more information about whether there is a Challenge program in your state, and to learn about application processes, visit: <a href="http://www.ngyf.org/challenge-near-you/">http://www.ngyf.org/challenge-near-you/</a>

## Funded by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Federal Funding Stream	Services Provided	Youth Eligibility
<b>Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Youth Activities</b> formula funds provide a framework through which local areas and states can leverage federal funding to support both in-school and out-of-school youth. WIOA requires that a minimum of 75% of youth formula dollars be used for out-of-school youth. Key program elements include financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills training, services that provide labor market data for the local area, activities to promote transition to postsecondary education, and education and training for a specific occupation/occupational cluster. At least 20% of funds must be used for work experiences such as on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeship, internships and summer employment.	Academic support, student supports services (childcare, transportation, etc.), tuition/fees; intake and assessment, case management, job coaching/search & placement, paid/unpaid work and internships, apprenticeships, leadership development.	Out-of-school youth include 16-24 year-olds who are not attending school, and have one or more barrier to employment. In-school youth are youth ages 14-21 who are attending school, low-income, and have one or more barrier to employment.
<b>Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Adult Activities</b> prepares workers (especially individuals with barriers to employment) for good jobs by providing job search assistance and training. The program emphasizes serving public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are low-skilled. Program performance is measured by entry into unsubsidized employment and earnings. The program helps jobseekers by providing training and support and helps employers meet their workforce needs.	Assessment of skill levels, training services, work-based training, basic skills training, and Individual Training Accounts. There is some flexibility to use funds for supportive services such as child care or transportation, to enable individuals to participate in services. Services are provided through local One-Stop Career Centers.	This program serves individuals ages 18 and older. Priority is given to public assistance recipients, low-income populations, and low-skilled individuals. Priority is also given to military veterans.
<b>Adult Secondary/Adult Basic Education</b> provides grants to states to fund local literacy and adult education programs. The goal of this funding is to assist learners, over the age of 16, in becoming literate, obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency, and completing secondary education. Historically, over half of these funds have gone to serve people under the age of 25.	The program provides instruction in arithmetic comprehension, GED preparation, reading and English literacy	Participation in ASE eligible programs is limited to adults and out-of-school youth age 16 and older, who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law, have not received a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate or who need to improve English language skills such as speaking, writing and reading.
<b>Job Corps</b> is a full-time, residential, education and vocational training program. It helps economically-disadvantaged youth earn a high school diploma or equivalent, learn career skills, and connect to job opportunities. It is free of cost to students who participate. There are approximately 131 Job Corps Centers across the United States.	Academic support toward earning a high school diploma through partnerships with local school districts, or a high school equivalency credential. Services also include room and board, counseling and mentoring services, and basic medical care while students are in the program, and career counseling and transitional support for up to 12 months after graduation.	Must meet <u>all</u> of the following: Is a legal U.S. resident; lawfully admitted permanent resident alien, refugee, asylee, or parolee, or other immigrant who has been authorized by the U.S. attorney general to work in the U.S.; or resident of a U.S. territory; meets low-income criteria; is in need of additional technical training, education, counseling, or related assistance to complete schoolwork or to find and keep a job; has signed consent from a parent or guardian if he or she is a minor; has a child care plan if he or she is the parent of a dependent child; does not exhibit behavioral problems that could keep him, her, or others from experiencing Job Corps' full benefits; does not require any face-to-face court or institutional supervision or court-imposed fines while enrolled in Job Corps; does not use drugs.
<b>YouthBuild</b> provides job training and educational opportunities for out-of-school youth. Youth learn vocational skills in construction, and some programs offer training in other in-demand industries, including health care, information technology, and hospitality. Youth also provide community service through the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing. Young people split their time between the training work site and the classroom, where they earn their high school diploma or equivalency degree, learn to be community leaders, and prepare for postsecondary training opportunities, including college, apprenticeships, and employment. The program includes support services such as a mentoring, follow-up, and counseling.	Job training in construction (with possibility of adding additional career tracks); high school diploma or equivalent; some programs offer dual enrollment in college courses; on-the-job training at construction sites; community service; leadership development; counseling; mentoring; job search and placement services; pre-apprenticeship training. Participants can receive modest stipends.	Young people who qualify as out-of-school youth under the WIOA definition. This would include 16-24 year-olds who are out-of-school and out-of-work. Young people who are court-involved can participate, as considered on a case-by-case basis by the local program.

## Funded by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

How Youth Access Services	What Entities Can Receive the Funding?	How to Apply for Funds
For information about jobs, training, and career resources, including services, call 877-US2-JOBS (877-872-5627) or visit: <a href="https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/default.aspx?frd=true">https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/default.aspx?frd=true</a>	Funding is distributed in a formula to states, who then distribute it to local workforce development boards to serve each community in the state. One-Stop Career Centers operate and administer funds. They often contract out certain services to community-based organizations, higher education institutions, and other training providers in their local community.	To explore contract and partnership possibilities, contact your local One-Stop Career Center in your community.
For information about jobs, training, and career resources, including services, call 1-877-US2-JOBS (1-877-87205627) toll-free. You can also visit: <a href="https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/default.aspx?frd=true">https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/default.aspx?frd=true</a>	Funding is distributed in a formula to states, who then distribute it to local workforce development boards. One-Stop Career Centers operate and administer funds. They often contract out certain services to community-based organizations, higher education institutions, and other training providers in their local community.	To explore contract and partnership possibilities, contact your local One-Stop Career Center in your community.
To find an Adult Basic Education program near you, visit this website: <a href="https://www.nationalliteracydirect.org">https://www.nationalliteracydirect.org</a> Alternatively you can contact your local Career One Stop Center and ask about basic literacy classes in your community. To find that contact information, visit: <a href="https://www.careeronestop.org/Credentials/Toolkit/find-american-job-centers.aspx?newsearch=true">https://www.careeronestop.org/Credentials/Toolkit/find-american-job-centers.aspx?newsearch=true</a>	State eligible agencies must demonstrate a history of or strong ability to effectively provide adult education and literacy activities. The Department of Education provides formula funds to state eligible agencies that are responsible for supervising state policy for adult education and literacy such as SEA's, postsecondary agencies, or workforce agencies. State eligible agencies may then fund local projects. The following types of eligible entities can apply to state agencies for funds: Local Education Agencies, community-based organizations with demonstrated effectiveness, volunteer literacy organizations with demonstrated effectiveness, institutions of higher education, public or private non-profit agencies, libraries, public housing authorities, other non-profit institutions that have the ability to provide literacy services, consortia of agencies.	Basic grants to States are allocated by a formula, based upon the number of adults over age 16, who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance, and have not completed high school in each State. States can grant those funds to eligible agencies, which in turn fund local projects. For more information, connect with your state's education agency.
You can enroll in Job Corps by calling (800)733-JOBS or (800)733-5627. Young people can also visit: <a href="https://recruiting.jobcorps.gov/Form/StudentApplication">https://recruiting.jobcorps.gov/Form/StudentApplication</a>	Large and small corporations and non-profit organizations manage and operate Job Corps centers under contractual agreements with DOL. These contract center operators are selected through a competitive procurement process that evaluates potential operators' technical expertise, proposed costs, past performance, and other factors.	The DOL administers contracts for local Job Corps Center operations. When Congress provides funding, a competitive process is initiated to select the site. Decisions on contract awards and the exercise of option years are influenced by center performance standards and assessments of quality and compliance. For more information, visit: <a href="https://www.jobcorps.gov/">https://www.jobcorps.gov/</a>
To find a YouthBuild program in your community visit: <a href="https://www.youthbuild.org/program-directory">https://www.youthbuild.org/program-directory</a> Applications vary by program. Visit your local program's website for application information and instructions.	Any non-profit community-based organization or municipality (workforce board, housing authority, etc.) can apply for a Department of Labor YouthBuild grant. For-profit entities cannot apply.	There is a Funding Opportunity Announcement from the DOL annually. DOL YouthBuild grants require a 25% non-federal match. Grants typically average between \$900k-\$1.1 million for 2 years of programming plus one year of follow up services. For more information, visit: <a href="https://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/youthbuild.cfm">https://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/youthbuild.cfm</a>



# Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Federal Funding Stream	Services Provided	Youth Eligibility
<p><b>Runaway, Homeless Youth Programs and the Prevention Grants to Reduce Abuse of Runaway Youth</b> are administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau. These programs support street outreach, emergency shelters, and longer-term transitional living and maternity group home programs to serve and protect these young people.</p> <p><u>Basic Center Program</u> provides crisis intervention, counseling, temporary shelter, after care services, amongst other services. This program serves youth ages 18 and under and their families, with some flexibility to serve older youth.</p> <p><u>Transitional Living Program</u> supports youth ages 16-22. It provides safe longer-term residential services for up to 18 months.</p>	<p><u>Basic Center Program</u>: Short-term services. crisis intervention, temporary shelter, family unification, after care services, counseling, sexual assault services, legal services, and other services.</p> <p><u>Transitional Living Program</u>: Longer-term services. Residential services that include basic life skills, interpersonal skills, education, job attainment skills, physical health, mental health care, amongst others.</p>	<p><u>Basic Center Program</u>: Youth who are at-risk of running away or becoming homeless, have already left home (either voluntarily or involuntarily), and are 18 or under. Some states allow older youth to come to a BCP shelter, depending on state and local laws and regulations.</p> <p><u>Transitional Living Program</u>: Youth ages 16-22, who may leave their homes due to family conflict or have left and not expected to return home are eligible. Pregnant and/or parenting youth are also eligible for these services.</p>
<p><b>Education and Prevention Grants to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth - The Street Outreach Program</b> allows organizations to help young people get off the streets. It promotes efforts by grantees to build relationships between street outreach workers and runaway, homeless, and street youth. Grantees also provide support services that aim to move youth into stable housing and prepare them for independence. The goal of the program is to prevent the sexual abuse or exploitation of young people living on the streets or in unstable housing.</p>	<p>Street-based education and outreach, access to emergency shelter, survival aid, individual assessments, trauma-informed treatment and counseling, prevention and education activities, information and referrals, crisis intervention, and follow-up support. Grantees are required to incorporate elements of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach into their programs.</p>	<p>This program serves youth 22 years old and younger who have been subjected to, or at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse, prostitution, sexual exploitation, and severe forms of trafficking.</p>
<p><b>McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth</b> addresses and removes the unique barriers homeless youth face in enrolling, attending, succeeding and thriving in school settings. The program guarantees a free, appropriate public education for all homeless children and youth.</p>	<p>Funds are used to ensure State Educational Agencies (SEAs) provide homeless children and youth with equal access to free and appropriate public education. Activities must focus on services documented by the Local Educational Agency (LEAs) that will facilitate the enrollment, retention, and educational achievement of homeless children and youth. Examples of activities and services funds can sponsor within a school district include: costs incurred in setting up records, transportation, tutoring, supplemental instruction, transportation assistance, expedited evaluations of strengths and needs-based assessments, childhood education programs, retention and engagement services, and professional development for educators.</p>	<p>The EHCY defines "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes – children and youth who are: sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up); living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; living in emergency or transitional shelters; abandoned in hospitals; or awaiting foster care placement. It also includes children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated as a regular sleeping accommodation. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above are also eligible.</p>

# Youth Experiencing Homelessness

How Youth Access Services	What Entities Can Receive the Funding?	How to Apply for Funds
To locate either type of program near you, call toll-free at: 1-800-621-4000. You can also visit <a href="http://www.1800runaway.org">www.1800runaway.org</a> .	<p><u>Basic Center Program:</u> Public and private non-profit organizations (and coordinated networks of non-profits) are eligible to apply for these three year grants. This excludes organizations that are part of the law enforcement structure or juvenile justice system. For-profit entities are not eligible. Private institutions of higher education must be non-profit entities. Priority is given to applicants who have demonstrated experience in providing services to runaway and homeless youth. Faith-based non-profit organizations are eligible. A 10% non-federal match is required through either cash or in-kind contributions.</p> <p><u>Transitional Living Program:</u> Public and non-profit entities are eligible, with priority given to those who have experience working with runaway and homeless youth. Faith-based non-profit organizations are eligible. A 10% non-federal match is required, either through cash or in-kind contributions.</p>	<p><u>Basic Center Program:</u> These three year grants are available through a federal competitive grants process that occurs annually. Funding is distributed based on the proportion of youth under age 18 in the jurisdiction. Minimum grants are \$200,000, with the exception of U.S. territories (which are lower). Projects must adhere to a Comprehensive Youth-Centered Service Model which includes access to shelter, gateway services, screening and assessment, coordinated case management, follow-up services, and continuum services linkages. For more information, visit: <a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/programs/basic-center-program">https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/programs/basic-center-program</a></p> <p><u>Transitional Living Program:</u> Project requirements include engaging in the coordinated entry process in the community, screening and assessment, providing comprehensive services, providing safe shelter. Awards are between \$100,000-\$200,000 per year with initial awards for one year with possibility of continuation. For more information, visit: <a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/tlp-fact-sheet">https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/tlp-fact-sheet</a></p>
To locate either type of program near you, call toll-free at: 1-800-621-4000. You can also visit <a href="http://www.1800runaway.org">www.1800runaway.org</a> .	Any private, non-profit agency is eligible to apply. Indian tribes and other Indian organizations are eligible to apply. Public agencies and for-profit entities are not eligible. Private institutions of higher education must be non-profit entities. Priority will be given to organizations with experience providing services to runaway, homeless, and street youth.	Competitive grants are available annually and grants span a three year period. Minimum grant amount is \$100,000 and maximum grants are \$200,000. A 10% non-federal match is required. For more information, visit: <a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/sop-fact-sheet">https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/sop-fact-sheet</a>
Accessing these funds will vary, but typically a school or education agency would make a determination of eligibility for a child or young person and connect them to these services. LEA's are responsible for identifying children who are eligible.	State: SEAs are eligible for funding based on data from the prior school year. SEA's eligibility is determined based on the number of homeless students identified by each State during the prior school year relative to the number of such children identified nationally during that school year. LEAs are eligible for funding based on need and availability of funds. Need is evaluated by the State.	<p><b>State Grants:</b> EHCY funds are allocated. The minimum state allocation in any given fiscal year is \$150,000. States must submit a state plan with a description of how homeless children and youth are given the same opportunity as other children to meet state academic achievement standards, procedures for the identification of homeless children and youth, procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes, and a description of programs for school personnel to heighten their awareness of the needs of runaway and homeless youth, demonstration that the SEAs and LEAs have reviewed and revised policies to remove educational barriers for homeless children and youth and assurances that SEAs and LEAs will adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youth are not stigmatized or segregated.</p> <p><b>District Grants:</b> States subgrant funds competitively to LEAs for program implementation at the district level. Applications for local funding are available through your state department of education office. State contacts are searchable at: <a href="https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html">https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html</a> Priority is given to local jurisdictions with high numbers of homeless children and youth.</p>

# Youth With Disabilities and Youth Exiting Foster Care or Juvenile Justice Systems

Federal Funding Stream	Services Provided	Youth Eligibility
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b> provides grants to support states in operating vocational rehabilitation programs. It is designed to provide services to people with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests, and capabilities. Training and services are designed to prepare people to engage in competitive employment and achieve self-sufficiency.	Services can include counseling, job search and placement assistance, training and education, post-employment support services, amongst other job training services. Statute requires that at least 15% of each state's vocational rehabilitation grant be allocated to pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.	Individuals with a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment, who can benefit from VR services for employment, and who require such services. Priority is given to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Applicants who are beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are presumed to be eligible for these services.
<b>Chafee Education and Training Vouchers</b> are a federal grant provided to states to support youth who have aged out of the foster care system and plan to or are actively enrolled in college, university and vocational training programs.	Students may receive up to \$5,000 a year based on their cost of attendance in post-secondary education. The voucher covers a variety of educational expenses including tuition, meal plans, balances due at school, room and board, books, school supplies, Federal student loans, study abroad programs, amongst others. Once these expenses have been addressed, ETV funds can pay for other items including rent, food, transportation, health insurance premiums, disability services, dependent child care expenses through licensed child care providers.	This program serves youth who have aged out of the foster care system. Eligible youth must be aged 18-20 (to apply, though the program can serve them until they are 23) in most states; however the age requirement varies by state. Youth must have a high school diploma or equivalent and be accepted into or enrolled in a Title IV accredited college or vocational/technical training program.
<b>Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)</b> provides funding for justice-involved youth and adults who were formerly incarcerated. These projects are designed to test the effectiveness of successful models and practices found in community and faith-based environments and other systems that have not yet been tested for adaptability into the workforce system. Projects focus on pre and post-release services, including case management.	Both pre and post release services can be provided. Services can include case management, educational skills training, tutoring, mentoring, high school diploma or equivalency preparation, credit retrieval, occupational skills training, job placement occupational learning, and other support services.	There are two types of eligibility - ages 18-24 and 25+. To serve young people ages 18-24, participants must have been involved in the juvenile or adult justice system. This population should include those who left high school without a diploma.



# Youth With Disabilities and Youth Exiting Foster Care or Juvenile Justice System

How Youth Access Services	What Entities Can Receive the Funding?	How to Apply for Funds
To view a list of all state vocational rehabilitation agencies and contact information, visit: <a href="http://www.askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies/">http://www.askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies/</a> Contact your state's rehabilitation agency to find out about the application process, services offered, and other information.	State vocational rehabilitation agencies administer these programs. They receive funding through a formula. While state agencies are key providers of services, they often contract with community rehabilitation providers to provide job development and support for VR consumers. Often they contract for specific services such as job development and placement.	Since this is a formula program, funds are distributed to each state based on that formula. To learn more about contract possibilities in your state, contact your state VR agency.
Students must enroll before their 21st birthday and may continue to receive support until age 23. To apply, contact a foster care manager at the child welfare agency in your state. Find more information here: <a href="https://www.fc2success.org/programs/education-training-vouchers">https://www.fc2success.org/programs/education-training-vouchers</a> Some states have their program administered by a third party. Visit <a href="http://www.fc2sprograms.org">www.fc2sprograms.org</a> to find out if you live in one of those states.	This is a voucher program, so there are no grant or contract opportunities for providers.	Students must enroll before their 21st birthday and may continue to receive support until age 23.  To apply, contact a foster care manager at the child welfare agency in your state. Find more information here: <a href="https://www.fc2success.org/programs/education-training-vouchers">https://www.fc2success.org/programs/education-training-vouchers</a>  Some states have their program administered by a third party. Visit <a href="http://www.fc2sprograms.org">www.fc2sprograms.org</a> to find out if you live in one of those states.
Because this is a pilot program, there are some states and many communities who do not have a REO program. For job search help and resources (including REO providers) for ex-offenders, visit: <a href="https://www.careeronestop.org/exoffender/default.aspx?frd=true">https://www.careeronestop.org/exoffender/default.aspx?frd=true</a>	Eligible applicants include community or faith-based non-profit organizations, state or local governments, or any Indian tribe or entity eligible for grants under WIOA. The Department likes to fund a mix of urban and rural projects. They are also interested in program models that offer apprenticeship opportunities, although that is not required. All projects must serve high-crime, high-poverty communities. This is defined as communities with poverty rates of at least 25 percent as exhibited using the American Community Survey data. High-crime communities must have crime rates within the targeted area that are higher than the rate for the overall city (for urban projects) or of non-metropolitan counties in the state (for rural projects).	Funding opportunity announcements (FOA) usually come out in the winter or spring. Maximum awards for non-intermediary applicants is \$1.5 million, while maximum awards for intermediary organizations is \$4.5 million. For more information visit: <a href="https://www.doleta.gov/REO/eta_default.cfm">https://www.doleta.gov/REO/eta_default.cfm</a>



THE  
**RECONNECTING**  
**YOUTH** CAMPAIGN

UNLEASHING LIMITLESS POTENTIAL